A 2

DISCOURSE

ON THE

NATURE AND SUBJECTS

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

By MOSES HEMMENWAY, A. M.
PASTOR of a CHURCH in WELLS.

BOSTON:
Printed by N. COVERLY and R. HODGE.
M. DCC. LXXXI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A DISCOURSE on the Nature and Subjects of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 19, 20.

" Go ye therefore and teach (or disciple) all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. Amen."

THE FIRST PART.

On the NATURE *of* CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THESE words contain the instructions which Christ gave his apostles, immediately before his ascension into heaven. And we have here their Mission, with the commission and authority given them for the execution of that office in the church, to which they were ordained.---The Object they were to attend to in their ministry, which was to make all nations disciples, baptizing them in the name of the divine Trinity, teaching them to observe all the commandments of Christ.---And the Encouragement they were to act upon in this great undertaking; even the promise of Christ's presence with them to the end of the world; implying, that the gospel ministry was to continue, in them and their successors, till time shou'd be no more; that they should be furnished for, and assisted in their work; and that their labours should be crowned with success.

The distinct consideration of these several particulars, I shall not now enter upon. My design is only to treat of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, the institution of which, as a standing gospel ordinance, we have in the words before us---A subject very necessary to be enquired into at this time, when our churches are charged by some among us with having so far departed from the gospel rule, in the administration of this ordinance, as that we have no true Baptism, and are therefore unfit for christian

BRITISH MUSEUM

A DISCOURSE on the Nature and Subjects of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 19, 20.

"Go ye therefore and teach (or disciple) all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. Amen."

THE FIRST PART.

On the NATURE *of* CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THESE words contain the instructions which Christ gave his apostles, immediately before his ascension into heaven. And we have here their Mission, with the commission and authority given them for the execution of that office in the church, to which they were ordained.---The Object they were to attend to in their ministry, which was to make all nations disciples, baptizing them in the name of the divine Trinity, teaching them to observe all the commandments of Christ.---And the Encouragement they were to act upon in this great undertaking; even the promise of Christ's presence with them to the end of the world; implying, that the gospel ministry was to continue, in them and their successors, till time shou'd be no more; that they should be furnished for, and assisted in their work; and that their labours should be crowned with success.

The distinct consideration of these several particulars, I shall not now enter upon. My design is only to treat of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, the institution of which, as a standing gospel ordinance, we have in the words before us---A subject very necessary to be enquired into at this time, when our churches are charged by some among us with having so far departed from the gospel rule, in the administration of this ordinance, as that we have no true Baptism, and are therefore unfit for christian

communion. Even the inſtitution of water baptiſm is denied by ſome.---Others deny that Sprinkling is a lawful and valid mode of adminiſtration, or that Infants are proper ſubjects. On the contrary, they hold that adult believers only are capable of receiving a valid chriſtian baptiſm; and that dipping the whole body into water is abſolutely neceſſary, and the only regular, lawful and valid mode of ſacramental waſhing; and therefore that our baptiſms are a nullity, as being adminiſtred in an unwarrantable way, to unqualified, and ſo incapable ſubjects.

Such charges as theſe we have often heard advanced with a ſurprizing confidence, and with an impatience and contempt of all contradiction, which, though it may perhaps amaze and ſtagger weak and unſettled minds, is rather a ſign of ignorance and ſelf-conceit, than of a ſound mind, or honeſt heart. When perſons affect a dogmatical and infallible ſtrain of diſcourſing on diſputable points, this is ſo far from being any evidence of their being in the right, that it may well breed in us a ſuſpicion that they either have but a ſhallow and ſuperficial underſtanding, or elſe that this confidence is only an artifice to maintain a weak cauſe, which will not bear the teſt of fair and calm reaſoning. The ſcriptures will not encourage us to expect any ſuperior wiſdom, or underſtanding in thoſe who are Wiſe in their own conceit. "God will guide the meek in judgment, and the meek will "he teach his way. But the ſcorner ſeeketh wiſdom and findeth "it not."

If they who ſet themſelves to decry and diſparage our adminiſtrations, will undertake, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, to point out to us, by the light of divine revelation, any irregularities which ought to be reformed; we ought moſt ſeriouſly and candidly to attend to them. But if they ſeek to carry their point by noiſe and confidence, it need not move us---The ſcriptures are our only and ſufficient rule of faith, worſhip, and practice. "To the law and to the teſtimony; if men ſpeak not according to this rule, (what illuminations ſoever they may boaſt of) there is no light in them."

The whole ſubject of our preſent enquiry, may be reduced to theſe two points, viz. What is Chriſtian Baptiſm? And who are the proper ſubjects of it? Theſe I ſhall endeavour to reſolve by the light of divine revelation---And as I claim no dominion over the faith of any, ſo I would ſpeak as unto wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay.

But before I proceed to the diſcuſſion of the ſeveral points which may come under examination, I would premiſe a few poſtulates, or rules of interpreting the ſcriptures, which I think cannot reaſonably be refuſed, or objected to.

1. The ſcriptures are always to be underſtood in that ſenſe of the words, which, taken in their connection, is moſt natural, plain, obvious, and familiar to us, and thoſe for whoſe inſtruc-

on

on they were primarily deſigned. The literal ſenſe is always to be preferred to a figurative one, unleſs there appear plain and good reaſons to the contrary. For inſtance, though the word baptize in our text is ſometimes taken in a figurative ſenſe, for the giving of the Holy Spirit; yet as it literally and primarily ſignifies a waſhing with water, and this ſenſe was moſt obvious and familiar to the Apoſtles, and is ſo to us, and the word commonly bears this ſenſe in the new teſtament, and there appears no incongruity with the context, or inconſiſtence with other parts of the ſcriptures, in underſtanding it thus in this place; we therefore conclude, that it is a Literal and Water Baptiſm that is here intended. On the contrary, when Chriſt tells his Apoſtles, "I am with you to the end of the world." We cannot underſtand the words literally, of his bodily preſence. For, as the apoſtles were to diſperſe into different and remote parts of the world, it was impoſſible that Chriſt ſhould be always with them bodily. And beſides, he was immediately to aſcend to, and remain in heaven, till the end of the world. This muſt therefore be underſtood Figuratively, of thoſe gracious aſſiſtances which he would afford to them.

2. The ſcripture is the beſt and ſureſt interpreter of Scripture, and if the meaning of any word or phraſe ſeems doubtful, we muſt compare it with other places, where a like expreſſion is uſed, or where the ſame ſubject is treated of perhaps in plainer language: and that interpretation is be adhered to, which is moſt conſonant to the general language and doctrine of the ſcriptures themſelves. Thus the word Baptize, in our text, may be compared with, and explained by the words of the apoſtle, in which he ſays, "That the church is ſanctified by the waſhing of water with the word:" whence we are to conclude that water Baptiſm is a goſpel ordinance: and that Baptiſm ſignifies a waſhing.

3. The ſcriptures are to be underſtood as containing not only thoſe truths which are expreſsly aſſerted, but alſo thoſe which are plainly implied. For example, it is not expreſsly aſſerted in our text that Baptiſm is to be a ſtanding ordinance in the church to the end of the world. But then, as Chriſt has promiſed to be with his miniſters in the execution of their commiſſion to the end of the world; and as they were in this their commiſſion inſtructed to baptize, as well as teach; it is a fair conſequence, that the duties, as well as the encouragements contained in their commiſſion, were to continue to the end of time; and ſo baptiſm is a ſtanding ordinance---And that this is the true meaning, implied, though not expreſſed in the text.

4. That is the true ſenſe of ſcripture which beſt agrees with the original text. Though the ſcriptures were written in Hebrew and Greek, by divine inſpiration, yet they were not tranſlated by divine inſpiration------Some words are not exactly tranſlated; and are to be corrected by the original. Our text, I think, is an example---This clauſe," go teach all nations,"

ought rather to be underſtood, "Go make all nations diſciples," for ſo the Greek word properly ſignifies. To teach or indoctrinate is expreſſed by another word, which we have in the latter verſe of our text: Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded.

5. That interpretation of ſcripture is to be adhered to, which gives the beſt, apteſt, and moſt inſtructive ſenſe to the words: unleſs it ſhould appear that a different ſenſe was intended---Thus for example, I think it makes better ſenſe to read our text according to the amendment propoſed; "Go make all nations diſciples; baptizing and teaching them, &c." than to read it according to our tranſlation, "Go teach all nations; baptizing them---teaching them;" where the repetition of the word Teach, ſeems needleſs and uninſtructive.

6. The practice of the primitive church, ſo far as it is known, is to be attended to, in caſe doubts ſhould ariſe concerning the meaning and proper adminiſtration of goſpel ordinances. The meaning of precepts is ſometimes cleared and aſcertained by authentic precedents. And we have no precedents which are ſo much to be regarded by us as the practice of the church in its earlieſt and pureſt ſtate; eſpecially in the apoſtolic age. For example, in our text baptiſm with water is not expreſsly mentioned; but we know that in the apoſtolic and primitive church, baptiſm with water was practiſed: which ſeems to put the matter out of all reaſonable doubt, that it is a water baptiſm that is here intended.

Keeping theſe rules in mind, let us ſearch the ſcriptures upon the ſubjects of our preſent enquiry. And the firſt thing to be conſidered is, "What is Chriſtian Baptiſm?"

In our text, Chriſt commiſſions his miniſters to baptize the nations. We borrow the word Baptiſm from the Greeks; among whom it was commonly uſed to ſignify a wetting or waſhing in ſome mode, as I ſhall ſhew more particularly in the ſequel. Among chriſtians, baptiſm is that Religious and Sacramental waſhing with Water, which Chriſt has appointed as the token and ſign of our admiſſion into the viſible church, and of our having an intereſt in the privileges, and coming under the obligations of the goſpel covenant. That Chriſt did inſtitute the rite of baptiſm, or waſhing with water in the name of the Trinity, our text, as compared with other places of ſcripture, is a clear and ſufficient proof; notwithſtanding the cavils of thoſe who would perſuade us that only a ſpiritual and figurative Baptiſm is required of chriſtians.

For, how unreaſonable is it to depart needleſsly from the primary, literal, plain, and obvious ſenſe of the word; and embrace a myſtical and metaphorical interpretation? The apoſtles would naturally underſtand that a waſhing of the body was enjoined. For this was a rite that they were familiarly acquainted with, and had

had often adminiſtred themſelves. It was, it ſeems, a common token of diſcipleſhip, during the miniſtry of John the baptiſt, and Jeſus Chriſt. The word, Baptize, is commonly in the new teſtament to be underſtood of a waſhing with water. The apoſtle's words ſhew, that the chriſtian baptiſm is of this kind. For he ſays, "that Chriſt ſanctifies his church with the waſhing of water, by the word *." And it is accordingly manifeſt that the apoſtles did adminiſter a water baptiſm: "Can any man forbid water," ſays Peter, at the houſe of Cornelius †, that theſe ſhould not be baptized: the Eunuch too was baptized with water ¶, and ſo no doubt, all thoſe were of whoſe baptiſm we have account. And as we muſt believe that the apoſtles acted agreeable to the commiſſion and inſtructions they received from Chriſt; ſo their practice is a moſt authentic precedent, whereby the nature and true meaning of chriſtian baptiſm, which is to be adminiſtred to all nations, is illuſtrated and aſcertained. And it has accordingly been conſtantly practiſed in the church, ever ſince the apoſtles.

But let it ſuffice to have hinted thus briefly at the proofs we have of the divine inſtitution of water baptiſm. There are other points which will need to be more particularly diſcuſſed. Some, who agree with us in acknowledging, that water baptiſm is a goſpel ordinance, yet hold "that dipping is the only lawful and "valid way of adminiſtring it; and that pouring or ſprinkling "of water is no true baptiſm."

This matter muſt therefore be enquired into: for, though it may ſeem of no great importance in itſelf, in which mode the ordinance is adminiſtred, (and indeed with us it is a matter of indifference) yet the advocates for dipping, generally lay ſo much ſtreſs upon this particular mode, as makes a ſcandalous ſchiſm in the church, whereby the edification of the body of Chriſt in holineſs, love, peace and comfort, is greatly obſtructed.

That dipping is a lawful mode of baptiſm we freely grant: And we ſhould ſcarce think it worth while to diſpute the matter with any, who ſhould be of opinion, that this is the moſt proper and ſignificant way; if they would not hold it to be abſolutely neceſſary, and ſo place the eſſence of the ordinance in what we verily believe to be but an indifferent circumſtance. We are ready to adminiſter the ordinance by immerſion occaſionally, if it be deſired. But as we look upon ourſelves, as being at liberty in reſpect of the mode of baptiſm, we think it our duty to "Stand "faſt in this liberty;" and not be intangled with the yoke of bondage, which we cannot find that Chriſt has laid upon us.

But there are ſome, who are not content to enjoy all the liberty in our churches that they can reaſonably deſire for themſelves: with them there is no true baptiſm without dipping: nor will they have chriſtian communion with any but thoſe who have gone into the water. According to them, there are no Goſpel churches in the world, except of thoſe who have been dipped.

None

* Eph. v. 26. † Acts x. 47. ¶ Acts viii. 36, 38, 39.

None are regularly called or ſent of God to preach the word, and adminiſter goſpel ordinances, till they have been dipped. None may preſume to come, or be admitted to the table of the Lord, till they have been dipped. And thus, as much as in them lies, they unchurch all the churches in the world, except thoſe who agree with them in the mode of baptizing.-----They deny the call and miſſion of their miniſters; invalidate and nullify their ordinances, and excommunicate thouſands, whom they cannot deny to be eminent for faith and holineſs; and, in a word, make the door of the viſible church ſo much narrower than Chriſt has made the gate of Heaven, that they reject far the greater part of thoſe whom Chriſt receives.

Now, however willing we are to have Chriſtian communion with all who, in a judgment of charity, are diſciples of Chriſt; yet if we cannot have it, unleſs we will diſcard the greater part of our chriſtian brethren; deny the miſſions and call of thoſe, whoſe miniſtry has been the means of our own converſion and edification, deny the validity of thoſe ordinances, which have ſo often been breaſts of nouriſhment and conſolation to us, and renounce our baptiſm, which we are conſcientiouſly perſuaded is both valid and regular; this we cannot conſent to.---And if any make this a ground of ſeparation from us, let all who have imbibed the ſpirit of chriſtianity judge, whether it be our fault; and whether ſuch rigidneſs in a matter ſo circumſtantial, is agreeable to the meek and charitable ſpirit of the Goſpel, or whether it does not rather look too much like phariſaical ſuperſtition, to ſay no worſe.

Methinks our opponents have more reaſon to queſtion the validity of their own adminiſtration, than to deny ours, upon the account of ſuch irregularities as they charge upon us. For they cannot deny that the baptiſm which is adminiſtred in their communions was received at firſt by their predeceſſors, from the hands of ſuch as, according to their principles, were unbaptiſed, and conſequently could not be regularly authorized to adminiſter the ordinance. If they think ſprinkling to be no true baptiſm, much more have they reaſon to doubt the validity of immerſion, when performed by an unbaptized and unauthorized adminiſtrator. And, if the firſt baptiſms of that ſect, when they firſt ſprung up, were invalid, how can thoſe adminiſtrations be thought valid and regular, which depend upon them.

We muſt therefore conclude, that dipping cannot be eſſential to baptiſm and Chriſtian communion. The conſequences are not to be endured.---The difficulties this principle will lead to, are inextricable.---We never can be ſatisfied that there is any true church, or valid baptiſm and ordinances in the world, upon theſe narrow principles.---And, as a farther preſumptive argument againſt the abſolute neceſſity of dipping, let it be conſidered, that as baptiſm is enjoined on all the diſciples of Chriſt, the outward rite is doubtleſs, ſuch as may be applied to all, whatever their circumſtances may

may be.---But there are many who cannot be dipped without extreme inconvenience and danger. In ſome parts of the world, water cannot be obtained for the moſt neceſſary uſes, without great difficulty and expence. How then can the poor get ſuch large ſupplies as are neceſſary for an immerſion? In cold climates, and in the winter ſeaſon, it would be dangerous to moſt, and, without a miracle, fatal to many to be plunged under water. Can we ſuppoſe that Chriſt has required it, as an indiſpenſible duty, that thoſe ſhould be dipped, who are ſo ſick and weak, that it would endanger their lives to waſh their hands, or be expoſed for a minute to the cold air? And yet there is no doubt but it may be the duty of ſuch to receive baptiſm.---Can we think it credible, that Chriſt's eaſy yoke and light burden ſhould, in the caſe of baptiſm, prove much more grievous and heavy, in many inſtances, than even the yoke of circumciſion.

Theſe conſiderations are certainly of ſo much weight, that the neceſſity of dipping ought not to be inſiſted on, unleſs there be clear and cogent reaſons for it. The ſubſtance of what is pleaded in favour of this mode, is reduceable to theſe five heads:

"That the proper meaning of the word Baptize, always implies dipping.

"That the ſcriptural examples of baptiſm were adminiſtered in this way.

"That this mode of adminiſtration is plainly pointed out, when the Apoſtle ſays, "We are buried with Chriſt in baptiſm."

"That dipping only anſwers to and fitly repreſents the thing ſignified in baptiſm.

"That the primitive church adminiſtered the ordinance by dipping."

On the contrary, we think, that the neceſſity of dipping cannot be argued from any of theſe topics; but that they will furniſh us with a good warrant in favour of the mode of affuſion or ſprinkling. Let us examine the matter diſtinctly.

And our firſt enquiry is, what is the true and proper meaning of the word Baptize, and whether it always implies dipping? We grant that the inſtitution of Chriſt requires whatever is eſſential to a true Baptiſm; but more than this cannot be held neceſſary. Now, we have no ſort of evidence, that the word Baptize always implies dipping; but it plainly appears to be of a larger and more general ſignification. It properly imports a wetting, waſhing, bathing, in any mode, either by dipping or ſprinkling, or bleeding, or weeping, or otherwiſe. In proof of this we appeal,

In the firſt place, to thoſe who are acknowledged to have been beſt ſkilled in the Greek language. All the Lexicons and critics, ſo far as I have found, agree, that the word ſignifies to wet, or waſh, as well as to dip. And if any who aſſert, that dipping is conſtantly implied, have pretended, that the learned maſters of the Greek held with them, it is certainly a miſrepreſentation.

There

There has not one been found of any character or note, ſo ſaying or intimating, but quite the contrary, they do with one conſent explain the word as I have ſaid. And they have ſhewn by clear and manifold examples from Greek writers, that waſhing or wetting, in whatever mode, whether ſprinkling or dipping, is Baptiſm.

But it is ſaid by ſome, "That the native, primary, and only "proper meaning of the word Baptiſm, is dipping: That it ſig- "nifies waſhing only, conſequentially and improperly: That it is "only ſuch waſhing as ſuppoſes, and is effected by dipping, that "is expreſſed by this word: That the primary and proper ſenſe "is to be preferred to a conſequential and improper one." To theſe ſeveral allegations I would reply;

We have no certainty that dipping is the primary and native ſignification of this word, or that waſhing or wetting is a conſequential or ſecondary ſenſe; though it is true, that ſome learned men have been of that opinion. I ſhould think, that wetting bids faireſt to be the firſt native, and original import of the word: For this is the eſſential idea (if I may ſo ſpeak) which is always connected with, and implied in every true and proper baptiſm. But we have many undeniable inſtances, in writers ſacred and profane, where the word Baptiſm is uſed to expreſs a wetting, without any dipping at all. Some of theſe I ſhall have occaſion to mention preſently. But, whatever the primary ſenſe of the word may be (which I leave to the critics, it being a matter of no conſequence) certain it is, that waſhing, in general, without reſtriction, to any mode, is a true and proper baptiſm, by the general acknowledgement of the learned *. And if we ſhould admit that this is not

* And yet Dr. Gill has the confidence to aſſert, in the face of the public, without any proof, that "the word Baptize ſignifies "always to dip, or to waſh by dipping; and never to pour or "ſprinkle."---Anſwer to Clark, page 77, directly contrary to the general and declared ſenſe of the moſt learned critics.--- "Chriſt no where requireth dipping, (ſays Dr. Featly) but only "baptizing; which word, (as Heſychius, Stephanus, Scapula, "and Budæus, the great maſters of the Greek tongue, make "good by very many inſtances and allegations out of claſſic "writers) importeth no more than ablution, or waſhing." Says Ravanellus, "Baptiſm ſignifies immerſion, and alſo ſprinkling." And Leigh, in his Critica Sacra, ſays, That the word Baptizo ſignifies, "To ſprinkle or waſh one's body ſacramentally."---Dr. Lightfoot, ſays, "The word baptiſm does not always denote im- "merſion, but ſometimes waſhing only, or even ſprinkling." Maſtricht ſays, "It ſignifies waſhing, either by ſprinkling or dip- "ping." And I know not why the Latin Dictionaries are not as good authorities in the caſe, as the Greek Lexicons. According to theſe

not the primary, but a ſecondary and conſequential meaning, what proof, probability, or preſumption can we gather from thence, that this is not the true ſenſe that Chriſt meant the words ſhould bear, in the inſtitution of the ordinance of baptiſm? A man muſt be very inattentive to the nature of language, who needs to be informed, that the native and primary meaning of words, is not the only meaning in which they may be commonly and properly uſed: And that by cuſtom, the original ſignification of numberleſs words is changed, enlarged, or reſtricted. It may ſeem needleſs to give examples for the illuſtration of ſo obvious a remark. A proclamation primarily ſignifies ſomething uttered, proclaimed, or publiſhed, with a loud voice; yet, as the word is commonly uſed and underſtood, this mode of publiſhing is not at all implied or intimated. An infant primarily ſignifies a child unable to ſpeak: But we underſtand by it any child under the age of diſcretion. And, to add another example, which may be a good parallel with the word Baptize: To Bathe, in the primary ſenſe, may perhaps imply an immerſion; and yet it is commonly uſed to expreſs a wetting, or waſhing in other ways; either by dipping, or pouring, or dropping on, or applying wet clothes, as is moſt convenient. And, a man would be ridiculous who ſhould contend, when ordered to bathe any part of his body, that dipping is abſolutely neceſſary, however inconvenient, and dangerous; and that becauſe bathing primarily ſignifies dipping, as he ſuppoſes. Whether a primary or a ſecondary ſenſe of any word is to be preferred, as the true ſenſe intended, can only be determined by other conſiderations. In ſhort, whatever be the primary meaning of the word baptize, which is uncertain, it is however agreed by all critics of note, that it ſignifies waſhing or wetting in general, without reſtriction to any particular mode; and particularly ſuch a waſhing as is not effected by dipping. We have not the ſlighteſt preſumption, from any thing that appears in the inſtitution of Chriſtian baptiſm, that the word is not there to be underſtood in the ſame indeterminate manner, or that Chriſt meant to confine his diſciples to any particular mode. Waſhing, in general, in any convenient mode, muſt therefore be preſumed to be the true intent of the inſtitution: For, as the words of the inſtitution fairly admit of this interpretation, and nothing of any weight can be objected againſt it; and as it is not credible,

theſe; the word Baptizo ſignifies to waſh, to ſprinkle, as well as to dip. And I ſuppoſe none will ſay the word ſignifies otherwiſe in Latin than in Greek. 'Tis eaſy, but needleſs to multiply authorities to the ſame purpoſe. However, we blame no one for diſſenting from all of them, if he can ſupport himſelf in it with good reaſons. But, for a man to ſet his own naked, unproved aſſertion, in oppoſition to the judgment of the learned in general; what muſt ſuch a man think of himſelf---and of his readers!

credible, that a mode of waſhing, ſo inconvenient, difficult, hazardous, and even impracticable as dipping muſt ſometimes be, ſhould be enjoined on all; the ſenſe we have given is in this caſe the preferable ſenſe, and has every advantage to recommend it.

But, perhaps, it may be ſaid, "That critics are not infallible, "and it may be ſuſpected that they are wrong, in ſaying, that "waſhing or wetting in general, in whatever mode, is expreſſed "and meant by the word Baptiſm."

I anſwer; in queſtions concerning the true meaning of words, the judgment of the learned, though not infallible, is doubtleſs of very conſiderable weight; and eſpecially when we find a general conſent among them. And that there certainly is upon this point, that waſhing or wetting, without reſpect to the mode, is Baptiſm, according to the uſage of the word by Greek writers. But if any are yet unſatisfied, we muſt examine the matter further; whether it can certainly be made to appear that the word bears the ſenſe which has been ſaid.

They who have been at the pains to examine the Greek claſſics, (Dr. Wall in particular) have proved by clear and manifold examples, that thoſe ancient writers were wont to uſe the word Baptiſe to expreſs a waſhing or wetting, even where there was no dipping at all, but only a ſprinkling. But I think it will be needleſs to enquire, how the word was commonly underſtood by heathen writers. It is the ſcriptural ſenſe alone that we are ſearching after. If this can be aſcertained we need no more.

Now, the Apoſtles have explained baptiſm to mean no more nor leſs than waſhing with water, and never once make uſe of any word to expreſs it by, or any phraſe or form of expreſſion, that ſignifies or implies dipping. They certainly knew the true intendment of the word in the inſtitution. If we can find how they underſtood the matter, we may be ſure that we have found the true and preferable ſenſe, let men call it a conſequential improper ſenſe, or what they pleaſe. Paul gives us the Scriptural ſenſe of the word Baptiſm, when he ſays, Eph. v. 2. That "Chriſt ſanctifies his church with the waſhing of water by the word." That baptiſm is meant by the waſhing with water I ſuppoſe will not be denied. And theſe words ſhew that a waſhing with water is a true baptiſm: From whence we may fairly conclude, that it is the waſhing with water, and not any particular mode, that is intended by Chriſt in the inſtitution of baptiſm. We have the very ſame deſcription of baptiſm in Heb. x. 22, 23. "Having our hearts "ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with "pure water, let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith," &c. And many ſuppoſe that baptiſm is meant by the "waſhing of regeneration." Tit. iii. 5. And once more, the outward baptiſmal waſhing is deſcribed as "A putting away the filth of the fleſh." 1 Pet. iii. 21. In all theſe deſcriptions it is remarkable

that

that there is not the leaſt hint of dipping, as any way implied in baptiſm; but the whole account we have of the matter, all that we can learn of the nature of this ſacred rite is, that it is "a waſhing with water."

Now, if dipping had been the only and neceſſary mode, is it any ways credible that the apoſtles ſhould always deſcribe it as a mere waſhing, and never once uſe any word or phraſe concerning it from which we can infer immerſion. It is certainly a fault in writing, needleſsly to uſe words of an inderminate meaning, and which tend to lead the reader into a wrong apprehenſion of the ſubject. And can we think that the inſpired apoſtles were ſo lax and inaccurate in their accounts of baptiſm, as conſtantly to leave out the very eſſence of the ordinance, and not point out that mode of adminiſtration, without which the waſhing is a mere nullity. The language they wrote in affords a variety of words ſignifying immerſion, ſome of which they make uſe of on other occaſions, but never once to expreſs the rite of baptiſm.

But it has been ſaid by ſome that the word Louo, to waſh, properly implies dipping, and not ſprinkling or affuſion. But this can never be made to appear, and we have plain evidence to the contrary. The waſhing of Polycrates' face with the rain is expreſſed by this word *. So is the waſhing the apoſtles ſtripes by the jailor; which cannot be thought to have been done by dipping them under water, but by the affuſion of ſome proper Bath. The ſame word is uſed to expreſs Chriſt's waſhing us from our ſins in his own blood. But the application of Chriſt's blood for our purification is always expreſſed by a ſprinkling of it, never by our being dipped in it. In the 51ſt Pſalm, according to the Greek verſion----theſe words in v. 2. Waſh me from mine iniquity and cleanſe me from my ſin; are thus explained in the 7th v. Sprinkle me with hyſſop and I ſhall be clean. All which ſhews that ſprinkling or affuſion is a Waſhing--Nor can we conclude from the apoſtle's ſpeaking of having our bodies waſhed in pure water, that a dipping the whole body is neceſſary, or even a waſhing the whole body in any mode. When Mary poured a box of ointment on Jeſus' head he calls it an anointing of his body. Nor is dipping required in order to the putting away the filth of the fleſh. 1 Pet. iii. 21. The purification of the fleſh, in the ſcriptural ſenſe, was effected by ſprinkling, as well as dipping. Heb. ix. 13.

But to proceed, The word baptize is uſed in ſcripture to expreſs ſuch waſhings as did not require, and were not effected by dipping. In Luk. xi. 38. we read, that a Phariſee who had invited Jeſus to dine with him, marvelled that he had not firſt Waſhed. The Greek word is Baptized. Here obſerve, that Jeſus omitted to waſh before dinner according to the Jewiſh cuſtom, which was the reaſon why the Phariſee wondered; and that this Waſhing

* Herodotus.

was properly called a Baptiſm. But how were the Jews wont ordinarily to waſh before their meals? Did they dip themſelves under water? If not, here is a plain proof and example of a waſhing that is called a baptiſm, without ſuch a dipping. Now if we turn to Mark 7th, we ſhall ſee what that waſhing was that was cuſtomary among the Jews before eating. "When the Pha-"riſees and ſome of the Scribes ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat "bread with defiled, that is to ſay, with unwaſhen hands, they "found fault. For the Phariſees and all the Jews except they "waſh their hands oft eat not. And when they come from the "market, except they waſh (the Greek is, except they are bap-"tized) they eat not." This ſhews, that in the language of the new teſtament a perſon is ſaid to be baptized, when a ſmall part of his body is waſhed. It is further to be obſerved, that the word Baptize is here explained by another Greek word (nipto) which ſignifies no more than waſhing in general, and which does not imply dipping, as all acknowledge; and in this place ſignifies no more than the waſhing of the hands. And though the hands may be waſhed by dipping them, yet as this may as well be done by pouring water on them, ſo the Jews were wont to waſh their hands in this manner, as Dr. Pocock has proved from Jewiſh writers: which is alſo confirmed by what we read, 2 Kings iii. 11. "That Eliſha poured water on the hands of Elijah," as ſervants were wont to do, when their maſters waſhed their hands. We ſee then that the cuſtomary waſhing among the Jews, which is here expreſsly called a baptiſm, implied no more than pouring water on a ſmall part of the body: And therefore that the word does not neceſſarily import a dipping of the whole body, or even of any part.

Again, in Heb. ix. 10. the apoſtle ſpeaks of the Jewiſh ritual as ſtanding in Divers Waſhings; the Greek is, different Baptiſms. And it appears that purifications by ſprinkling are eſpecially intended. For he adds, with a plain reference to, and as an illuſtration of what he had juſt ſaid: "If the blood of bulls and goats, "and the aſhes of an heifer, Sprinkling the unclean ſanctifieth "to the purifying of the fleſh, how much more ſhall the blood "of Chriſt," &c. which ſhews that theſe purifications by ſprinkling are inſtances of thoſe waſhings or baptiſms he had mentioned, and indeed ſome of the chief inſtances: otherwiſe it would not have been pertinent to his purpoſe to have noticed them on this occaſion. A plain proof that ſprinkling is a true baptiſm.

Further, The apoſtle ſays of the Iſraelites who came out of Egypt that "they were baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in "the ſea." 1 Cor. x. 2. How were they baptized? Certainly they were not dipped. For they went on dry ground through the ſea, which ſtood as a wall on each hand. It was the Egyptians only that were baptized by immerſion. According to the account Moſes gives, the Iſraelites could no otherwiſe be baptized in the cloud

cloud and ſea, than by being ſprinkled with rain from the one, and a ſpray from the other, as they paſſed along: to which Pſal. lxviii. 7, 8, 9, is thought to refer. Here is then another inſtance of baptiſm by ſprinkling; which was a token of the ſeparation or ſanctification of the people to God. This gives a natural and eaſy account of the matter. But how unnatural and ſtrained is our opponent's way of explaining it: "That the people having the ſea "on each hand, and the cloud over their heads, ſeemed to be as "it were dipped or encloſed in water." On which I would obſerve, that the apoſtle ſays not that they ſeemed to be as it were baptized, but in plain terms that they were Baptized. But whatever reſemblances of dipping people may imagine, immerſion without wetting is certainly no real Baptiſm. For whether the mode of waſhing be eſſential or not, yet the waſhing or wetting itſelf is indeed eſſential to a true and proper baptiſm. When the word ever ſignifies immerſion, yet it is ſuch an immerſion as includes and neceſſarily infers waſhing or wetting being in order to, or for the ſake of tinging, or ablution, as is commonly obſerved by the critics. If people may be baptized by having the water round them, though they are not wet by it at all, the dry hold of a ſhip upon the water would ſerve as well as Jordan: And by going down into it; we ſhall be dipped in the ſea in like manner as the Iſraelites were --What is further ſaid of the repreſentation of a burial and reſurrection in their going down into, and coming up out of the ſea, is quite impertinent. The apoſtle ſays nothing of their being buried in the ſea. It was their enemies only that were buried; and ſunk as lead in the mighty waters.---In ſhort---The fathers were baptized in the cloud and ſea---A true baptiſm neceſſarily implies wetting. They were not wet by immerſion---they could not therefore be baptized by immerſion--whatever waſhing they received could be only by ſprinkling--It was therefore in this mode undoubtedly that they were baptized. Which is another proof that ſprinkling is a mode of baptiſm.

Let us now conſider the words of Chriſt. Luk. xii. 50. "I "have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till "it be accompliſhed." Chriſt here calls his ſufferings a baptiſm. But it ſeems to me that commentators have miſſed the true interpretations of theſe words. They ſuppoſe the baptiſm here ſpoken of is to be taken in a metaphorical, and not a literal ſenſe. Hence ſome have argued in favour of the mode of dipping as moſt fitly expreſſive of the ſufferings of Chriſt, who was plunged and ſunk in anguiſh and diſtreſs. Others argue as well and fairly in favour of the mode of affuſion, as expreſſive of the pouring out the curſe of God, and the vials of his wrath due to our ſins upon Chriſt the atoning ſacrifice. Thus people explain the ſuppoſed metaphor, according to their different views. But, methinks, the plain literal ſenſe is more apt and natural, than either of theſe far fetched interpretations. The ſacred body of the

the bleſſed Jeſus was truly and literally baptized---He was wet and bathed in his own tears, and ſweat, and blood, in his agony in the garden, and when he was ſcourged, and nailed to the croſs. He was baptized and ſanctified by the blood of the covenant, Heb. x. 29. that is, by his own blood; even as the Jewiſh high prieſts were baptized, ſanctified, and conſecrated with water and the blood of beaſts, as types of Chriſt. And accordingly it was a common expreſſion of the antient fathers, concerning the martyrs, who had ſhed their blood in bearing witneſs to the Chriſtian faith, that they were baptized with their own blood.---Here is then, I think, another very good proof, that dipping is no ways eſſential to baptiſm.---For, Chriſt was not dipped, and his martyrs are not dipped in their bloody baptiſm; but he was wet, and tinged, and bathed in his ſweat, and blood iſſuing from his pores and veins.

Let us now make ſome remarks on the baptiſm with the Holy Ghoſt, which is often ſpoken of. This is indeed a figurative baptiſm, by which the ſubjects of it were ſanctified, conſecrated and ſeparated to God, in a higher and more eminent ſenſe, than thoſe were who had only been conſecrated by water baptiſm. But how is this ſpiritual baptiſm explained? There are ſeveral expreſſions which are plainly of the ſame import: ſuch as the "pouring out of the ſpirit" upon the ſubject. When the Apoſtles were baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, according to Chriſt's promiſe, Acts i. 5. Peter obſerves, that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, "It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour out of my ſpirit." Acts ii. 17. and again ver. 33. "That Chriſt being "by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the "Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed or poured "forth thoſe things which ye now ſee and hear*." Here we ſee "that pouring upon," and baptizing are ſynonimous expreſſions. The one explains the other. Now if the pouring out of the ſpirit be the baptiſm of the ſpirit, the pouring of water muſt alſo be a baptiſm of water.---It is to be well obſerved, that as the Holy Spirit is in ſcripture often ſignified by water, as a fit emblem of his ſanctifying and comforting influences; ſo the conferring of the ſpirit upon us, which is undoubtedly the true intendment of the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, is not repreſented by the ſimilitude of dipping into water, but as a pouring or ſprinkling of water upon us---Iſa. xliv. 3. "I will pour waters on the thirſty, and floods "on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit on thy ſeed, and my "bleſſing on thine offspring." See alſo, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I "will

* This entirely overthrows that ſtrange conceit advanced by Dr. Gill, That the baptiſm of the Apoſtles with the Holy Ghoſt, means their being dipped into the Holy Ghoſt, which filled the houſe where they were met. But Peter ſays, It was by a pouring out, or ſhedding forth of the Spirit upon them, that they were then baptized.

" will ſprinkle clean water on you, and ye ſhall be clean. A new " heart will I give you," &c. All which I think proves plainly, that ſprinkling is in ſcripture conſidered as a mode of baptiſm.--- I will add one remark more. The baptiſm with the Holy Ghoſt is termed, an unction or anointing, 1 John ii. 20, 27. The holy oil, with which perſons were anointed in their conſecration, was a ſign or emblem of the Holy Spirit given to them, to fit them for the offices to which they were called. The ſame is alſo ſignified by Chriſtian baptiſm. Now, it is by pouring on of oil that perſons are anointed; and it is by pouring out of the Spirit upon us, that our anointing or baptiſm with the Holy Ghoſt is expreſſed. As therefore baptiſm anſwers in ſignification to anointing, we may well conclude, that it may properly be adminiſtred in the ſame way, that is by affuſion. Can we doubt whether affuſion be a true baptiſm, when we find that in ſcripture, Baptizing, Pouring Sprinkling, and Anointing, are parallel, and ſignify the ſame thing?

The word baptize occurs but once that I remember in the Greek verſion of the old teſtament, 2 Kings v. 14. Our laſt Engliſh tranſlation renders the place, " He dipped himſelf in Jordan." But there is nothing in the account that determines in what manner this waſhing was performed. In the older Engliſh bibles the place is rendred " He waſhed himſelf in Jordan," which divers learned men have preferred, and which was what the Prophet directed to ver. 10. without preſcribing the mode. But it is worthy of particular remark, that the word Bapto whence baptize is derived, and which is of like ſignification, this word is uſed by the Greek tranſlators to expreſs the wetting of Nebuchadnezzar's body with the dew of heaven; which could not mean a dipping, but a ſprinkling---Indeed wetting ſeems to be the genuine ſignification which this word conſtantly bears throughout the old and new teſtament.

One remark more I will add. In all the different tranſlations of the new teſtament that I have ſeen, I have not found that the word Baptizo in the original is ever rendered by a word ſignifying or implying immerſion. But they either retain the original word, or render it waſhing or ablution: which we cannot think they would have done, if the authors had not been ſatisfied that this is the true ſcriptural ſenſe, however the word is uſed in heathen writers.

And we find accordingly, that the ancient fathers did often uſe the word Baptiſm to expreſs a wetting when there was no dipping. They ſpeak of the baptiſm of Clinicks and others, as adminiſtered by ſprinkling, and allow it to be a valid baptiſm.--- The Latins too did commonly term a baptized perſon Tinctus, wet or tinged, a word which no more implies dipping than affuſion. They ſpeak of the martyrs as baptized with their own blood --- which could not mean immerſion, as has been noted. And finally, they ſpeak of penitents as baptized with the baptiſm

tiſm of tears, which certainly could not intend their being dipped in them, but only wet with weeping---Theſe things are a ſufficient proof that theſe ancient writers underſtood the word in that large and general ſenſe, which I have ſhewn is the ſcriptural ſenſe---And upon the whole, to imagine that dipping only is baptiſm, is a groundleſs and miſtaken notion. And is confuted by the greateſt and moſt unexceptionable authorities and by inconteſtible inſtances from the ſcriptures and the ancient chriſtian writers.

To find and aſcertain the ſignification of the word, will, I think, determine the diſpute concerning the mode of Baptiſm. For which reaſon, I have examined the matter the more carefully. And the concluſion in which this enquiry has iſſued, will not be at all weakened, but rather much confirmed by the account we have in the ſcriptures of the adminiſtration of this ordinance. And this leads us to conſider,

Secondly, Whether the neceſſity of dipping can be argued from theſe ſcriptural precedents. Some ſuppoſe, that "John "Baptiſt and the apoſtles baptized by immerſion only: And "that we are bound herein ſtrictly to follow their example." On the contrary, we can find no certainty that immerſion was ever practiſed in the apoſtolic age. It is morally certain that this was not the conſtant mode of adminiſtration. And whether it was practiſed or not, there is no reaſon for inſiſting that this mode is either neceſſary or moſt expedient---to be conſtantly obſerved by us.

As I am far from calling in queſtion the lawfulneſs of baptizing by immerſion, I would not be underſtood in aſſerting, or undertaking to prove, that the apoſtles did not baptize in this manner, in ſome inſtances. But this may truly be ſaid, that it does not certainly appear whether they did or not. That baptiſm was in any one inſtance adminiſtred by dipping, the ſcripture ſaith not; nor can it certainly be gathered from the accounts we have given us. And if ſome circumſtances that are related may ſeem to favour the probability that immerſion might ſometimes be practiſed, they are perhaps at leaſt fully balanced by probable arguments to the contrary. The matter is indeed of ſo very little importance, that it would not be worth while to ſpend time in examining the inſtances alledged, did not ſome lay great ſtreſs upon them. 'Tis true, we read that Jeſus was baptized by John in Jordan; and then came up out of the water. Mark. i. 9, 10. "That the Jews were alſo baptized of John in Jordan." Mat. iii. 6. "That John baptized in Enon, becauſe there was much water." John iii. 23. "That the Eunuch went "down into the water with Phillip, and when he was baptized "they came up out of the water." Acts viii. 38, 39. But whether any of theſe were dipped is uncertain. It is not even certain whether any of theſe inſtances went into and were baptized, in

in the water; though the texts are ſo rendered in our Engliſh bible. But the Greek, which is the authentic ſtandard will fairly admit of this ſenſe, as critics have often obſerved, viz. That they went down to, were baptized at, and went up from the water*. But waving this remark, ſuppoſing they did go into the water, and were there baptized; it does not follow that they were plunged. It is nothing ſtrange or improbable if they ſtepped into the water, that they might be baptized by affuſion. Though there was much water, or many waters, (as the phraſe properly ſignifies) at Enon, where John was baptizing. This is no proof that he dipped, or made uſe of much water in baptiſm, or that there was even a convenient depth of water for ſuch a purpoſe. Travellers have reported that there are only ſprings and ſmall rivulets to be found in this place. As multitudes reſorted to John, a place that was well ſupplied with water, for their uſe and refreſhment would be moſt convenient, ſuppoſe none of them were dipped, as I find no certainty that they were. And if any ſhould think that the adminiſtration of baptiſm at rivers, and in places where there was plenty of water, is a circumſtance that favours immerſion, though it is needleſs to conteſt this point, yet we might eaſily mention ſeveral things as probable arguments that immerſion was not practiſed in theſe inſtances. It ſeems unlikely that mixed multitudes of both ſexes ſhould be dipped naked. And it was contrary to the Jewiſh cuſtom to bathe with any of their clothes on; in which reſpect they were ſo ſtrict, that they held a perſon to be unclean, if but the top of one of his fingers were covered, when he bathed himſelf for his cleanſing---Or if immerſion were received with the clothes on, this would require a ſhifting of apparel, which we have no hint of. Nor can we eaſily conceive how ſtrangers, who came from home without any deſign of being baptized, as was the caſe with ſome, ſhould be furniſhed with neceſſary change of raiment for this purpoſe.

* The Greek text does not determine whether Jeſus and the Jews were baptized in Jordan or only at Jordan for the particles (en and eis) here uſed, ſignifying, in, at, or to. See Rom. viii. 34, (en). At the right hand of God, Nor is it certain that the Eunuch went into the water. The particle (eis) is often rendred, to. John xx. 4. The other diſciple came firſt (eis) to the ſepulchre, yet went he not in. Philip and the Eunuch went up (ek) from the water: So the particle is elſewhere rendered. See Mat. xii. 42. The queen of the ſouth came (ek) from the uttermoſt ends of the earth. Jeſus when he was baptized went up (apo) from the water; as the phraſe moſt properly ſignifies. I do not mention theſe things as faulting our Engliſh tranſlation. All that I aim at is, that the original may fairly be rendered either way: and that this circumſtance, as it is immaterial, ſo it is left undetermined.

purpoſe. Or how John ſhould be able, without a miracle, to bear the hardſhip of ſtanding in the water up to his waiſt a great part of his time, to dip the multitudes that came to him. Theſe circumſtances muſt ſurely weaken, if not overballance, all probabilities or preſumptions that can be pleaded in favour of immerſion, in theſe inſtances.

But be this as it may, we may be morally certain, that immerſion was not only conſtantly practiſed by the apoſtles in the adminiſtration of baptiſm. We have accounts of ſeveral inſtances, ſo circumſtanced, that the ſuppoſition of their being dipped is moſt incredible. Particularly the 3000 baptized on the day of Pentecoſt. For it was at leaſt nine o'clock when Peter began his ſermon. After this he had a long conference, and with many words counſelled, teſtified, and exhorted them. Then the apoſtles had to receive a confeſſion of faith from each of them diſtinctly; and then baptize them ſeverally: Which, though done in the quickeſt manner, would require the whole remainder of the day. But in the ſlower way of immerſion, we cannot conceive how it could be done by the apoſtles without a miracle. Nor may we ſuppoſe that the apoſtles were aſſiſted in this work by the ſeventy diſciples, who appear not to have been authorized to adminiſter the ordinances. Beſides, how incredible is it, that they ſhould on a ſudden find conveniences for dipping ſo many, in the midſt of a city, among zealous oppoſers; or that ſo many ſtrangers ſhould either be baptized naked, or have change of raiment. We cannot rationally think, that they could be baptized otherwiſe than by affuſion. Nor is it probable that Paul was baptized by immerſion: For, upon Ananias coming in to him, putting his hands upon him, &c. we read, that he immediately received his ſight, aroſe and was baptized; that is, in the houſe where he was: there being no hint of his going out to any water, weak as he was with long faſting and agitation of mind *. It is not probable that thoſe were dipped who were baptized at the houſe of Cornelius, Acts x. 47. Peter ſeeing them filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſaid, "Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized." The natural ſenſe is, Can any forbid water to be brought or provided to baptize theſe: not, whether any could forbid their going to the water. And, in the account of their baptiſm, there is no hint of their going from the houſe. It is highly improbable, that the jailor and his houſe were baptized by immerſion; for, this was done in the night, and in the priſon, where there was no river

* Acts ix. 17, 18. Note, Paul was baptized without a profeſſion of faith, upon Chriſt's teſtimony concerning him, that he was a choſen veſſel. The teſtimony of Chriſt, that the infants of believers are of the kingdom of heaven, are holy, are intereſted in the promiſe, is as good a warrant for baptizing them without a profeſſion of their faith.

river or pool to be imagined. Can it be thought, that the jailor, with his whole family, and his priſoners, whom he was charged to keep at his peril, ſhould at ſuch an hour, grope away in the dark, or go with a lanthorn or torch to a river or pool, no one knows where, and that through a city, juſt waked up with a great earthquake, and the ſtreets, it is probable, filled with the frighted citizens? They might all well expect to be taken up and puniſhed for helping the priſoners to make their eſcape. Nor is it credible that the apoſtles would have done ſuch a thing; who would not leave the priſon till the magiſtrates took them out. The adminiſtration of baptiſm would, doubtleſs, have been deferred, if it could not then have been attended without all this difficulty and danger. Beſides, there is no account of their going out to the water, or leaving the priſon. The houſe of the jailor, into which he brought the apoſtles, ſeems to have been a ſeparate apartment of the building, where the keeper dwelt, that he might conveniently attend his charge. And we may here make this general remark; that among all the inſtances of baptiſm mentioned in the New Teſtament, it is never ſaid or intimated, that they went from the place where they happened to be, to any river or ſtream, that they might be baptized in or at it. But all who are ſaid to have been baptized in any ſtream were by it, when they firſt offered themſelves to baptiſm.

Upon the whole, we have much more evidence that dipping was not conſtantly practiſed by the apoſtles, in the adminiſtration of baptiſm, than we have that it was practiſed by them at all. But, if after all, it ſhould ſeem to any, that this was the mode in which the apoſtles commonly adminiſtered the ordinance, it would be no proof that they diſapproved the mode of ſprinkling; any more than the common practice of ſprinkling among us is an argument that we diſallow of dipping. The apoſtles might have good reaſons, in compliance with the cuſtoms or inclinations of the firſt converts, to adminiſter baptiſm in ſuch a mode as is neither neceſſary nor moſt expedient for us. But whether they did or not, the mode is a circumſtance in which we are left at liberty. For, it is not any particular Manner of baptizing that is enjoined upon us, but it is Baptiſm itſelf, in whatever way we find moſt convenient. And that ſprinkling is a true and proper baptiſm, in the ſcriptural ſenſe of the word, has been ſhewn before. Again,

Thirdly, The neceſſity of immerſion is argued from the apoſtle's words, Rom. vi. 4. "We are buried with Chriſt in baptiſm." Which words have been ſuppoſed to refer to this mode of burying the ſubject in water. But it does not appear that any ſuch reference or alluſion is here intended. The apoſtle is here ſhewing, that "Chriſtians may not live any longer in ſin, inaſmuch as they are dead to it." To prove and illuſtrate this, he reminds us of our being "baptized into Chriſt." By baptiſm, we are not only dedicated to Chriſt, and brought into a ſpecial relation to

him

him as his diſciples; but, our baptiſm is the outward ſign of our ingrafting into Chriſt, and ſo of our ſpiritual union to him, and communion with him, in the benefits obtained for the members of his body, by his crucifixion, death, burial and reſurrection; and alſo of our obligation to a ſpiritual conformity to his crucifixion, death, burial and reſurrection, as is noted and illuſtrated in what follows. Being thus "baptized into Chriſt, we are baptized in-"to his death." We not only participate of the benefits obtained by his death, but are bound to a ſpiritual conformity to him in his crucifixion and death; by the crucifixion and death of our old man, with its affections and luſts. "Therefore we are buri-"ed with him by baptiſm into death." Baptiſm ſignifies our union and communion with Chriſt; and our profeſſion and obligation to a conformity to him, "in his burial," as well as his crucifixion, and death. The old man, with his deeds, muſt be put off, utterly rejected and buried. We muſt, in reſpect of our former luſts and converſation, be as if we were "dead and buried." We, in our baptiſm, profeſs and are obliged to have done with theſe things; to endeavour, that the body of ſin may be quite mortified and deſtroyed. But this work of mortification, in which "we are made conformable to Chriſt's death," is in order to a ſpiritual reſurrection; in conformity to the example, and by the quickening virtue of Chriſt's reſurrection: "That like as "Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father, ſo "we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life." So that according to the apoſtle, baptiſm imports our union and conformity to Chriſt in his crucifixion, death and reſurrection, as well as in his burial. And why baptiſm ſhould be ſuppoſed to bear an outward reſemblance of his burial, rather than of his crucifixion and death, or why any ſhould fancy an alluſion to the mode of immerſion, I can ſee no reaſon.

I might further obſerve, that dipping a perſon in water does not reſemble the burial of Chriſt, who was not laid in a common grave, but in a tomb hewn out of the ſide of a rock, into which they entered by a door. Nor does it reſemble a common burial, which is not ſo properly the letting down the body into the grave, as the caſting in the earth upon it; of which the ſprinkling or pouring of water on a perſon is no unfit repreſentation; but dipping bears no reſemblance to it. It has alſo been noted, that it was anciently a common practice at funerals to pour ointment on the dead body, of which the pouring of water in baptiſm is a good reſemblance; but there is nothing like it in dipping. However, I lay but little ſtreſs upon theſe things. The truth is, baptiſm does not appear to have been deſigned for a repreſentation of Chriſt's burial and reſurrection. It is the application of the benefits of redemption to Chriſtians, that is mainly ſignified in this ſacrament. And it is not an outward, but a ſpiritual conformity to Chriſt's death and burial that is intended by our being buried with him in baptiſm.

But

But, admitting that the mode of immerſion may here be alluded to, nothing more could be fairly argued from it, than that immerſion is a lawful way of baptizing, and was not unknown and unpractiſed in the apoſtolic age. But, does this prove any thing againſt the lawfulneſs of ſprinkling? Does an alluſion to the one mode imply a diſapprobation of the other? If probable alluſions are ſufficient evidence in the caſe, this argument may be improved in favour of ſprinkling with equal advantage. See Heb. x. 22, 23. "Having our hearts ſprinkled," that is, baptized or purified ſpiritually, "from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed "with pure water," that is, baptized externally, "let us hold "faſt the profeſſion of our faith," ſealed in our baptiſm. Matth. iii. 11. "I baptize you with water," or pour water upon you, "but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt," or pour the Spirit upon you. Tit. iii. 5. "According to his mercy he ſaved "us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy "Ghoſt, which he ſhed or poured upon us." By the waſhing of regeneration, many underſtand baptiſm, the goſpel ſacrament of regeneration; others underſtand the grace of regeneration, of which baptiſm is the inſtituted ſacramental ſign. It is, however, called a waſhing, in alluſion to the rite of baptiſm; and therein the Spirit is ſaid to be ſhed or poured forth, in alluſion to the affuſion of water in the adminiſtration of baptiſm. The alluſion to the mode of ſprinkling or affuſion, is, I think, at leaſt as probable in theſe texts, as the alluſion to dipping is in any texts that can be found. The concluſion then muſt be, that both ways of baptizing are lawful, and were practiſed by the apoſtles, and this we freely agree to. If our opponents will do the ſame, the diſpute is at an end.

Let us now enquire, fourthly, Whether dipping anſwers to and repreſents the thing ſignified in Baptiſm better than ſprinkling. It has juſt been obſerved, that Baptiſm is the outward ſign and token of the application of the benefits of redemption to believers, in their juſtification, and ſanctification. "Chriſt waſhes us from "our ſins in his own blood." And Baptiſm, as the outward ſign of the application of Chriſt's blood, is, "for the waſhing away of "ſins." But how is the application of Chriſt's blood for our cleanſing repreſented? It is called, "the blood of ſprinkling." And the apoſtle ſpeaks of the "ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus "Chriſt." But we are never ſaid to be cleanſed from ſin by being dipped into the blood of Chriſt.—Again, Baptiſm is the inſtituted ſign of our having the gift of the Holy Ghoſt beſtowed upon us. "Be baptized," ſays Peter, "and ye ſhall receive the gift of "the Holy Ghoſt." Now, the donation of the Holy Ghoſt is never expreſſed by our being dipped into the Holy Ghoſt; but by his being poured out, and our being ſprinkled thereby; which is called our being baptized with the Spirit. Sprinkling is therefore a more apt repreſentation of the application of the blood of Chriſt,

Chriſt, and the influences of the Spirit, for the cleanſing of our ſouls from ſin. The argument, therefore, from the analogy of the ſign with the thing ſignified, is plainly in favour of ſprinkling, rather than dipping. It is true, our ſpiritual conformity to Chriſt in his death and reſurrection is not unfitly ſignified by immerſion. But ſprinkling more aptly repreſents the application of the benefits of redemption to us; which is the main thing ſignified by baptiſm.

Fifthly, We will now conſider, whether any thing can be argued in favour of the neceſſity of immerſion, from the practice of the ancient church, who it is ſaid, generally baptized in this way. As to the apoſtolic age, we have no expreſs account in what mode baptiſm was then adminiſtred; but it is morally certain, as has been ſhewn, that immerſion was not the conſtant practice. And though it appears that this mode afterwards became very cuſtomary, and was generally preferred; yet it was never held to be neceſſary. Sprinkling was uſed all along upon occaſion: as in caſe of ſickneſs, and when dipping was inconvenient *. We have plainly then the judgment and practiſe of the primitive church on our ſide, that ſprinkling is a true and valid baptiſm; and that dipping is not eſſential. We do not indeed think ourſelves bound to follow the judgment and practice of the ancients in preferring and generally practiſing immerſion, for which we find no good reaſon. Nor have our opponents any reaſon to blame us for this; ſince they too have taken the liberty to depart very far from the practice and cuſtom of the ancients. They knew nothing of the modern cuſtom of dipping people in their clothes. They held it as neceſſary that the perſons be ſtript naked, as that they ſhould be dipped. And they thought there was an important ſignificancy in this rite, importing the "putting off the old man with his deeds." After baptiſm, the perſon was

* The baptiſm of Clinicks, which was adminiſtred in the primitive church by Sprinkling has been before mentioned. Tertullian too refers to this mode of baptiſm, when he ſays, Speaking to an impenitent perſon, "who will afford thee one ſprinkling of water (aſperginem unam cujuſlibet aquæ) for baptiſm." And of Laurence the martyr, contemporary with Cyprian, we are told, that he baptized a Roman ſoldier with a pitcher of water. And alſo, that he baptized one Lucillus pouring water on his head. Athanaſius too, ſpeaking of thoſe who were baptized by Heretics, ſays, "They who are ſprinkled by them are further defiled by a corrupt religion, than redeemed." 3d. Oration againſt the Arians. To this it may be added, (what I have ſomewhere read) that the ancients when they had dipped a perſon, were wont to apply water to his face. From all which, and much more that might be produced, it appears that the mode of ſprinkling was practiſed, and allowed in the primitive church.

was clothed with white garments, signifying the "putting on Christ, or the new man." And some have supposed that the apostle in these expressions alludes to this custom of stripping and clothing in the administration of baptism: A supposition of like probability, I conceive, as that our being "buried with Christ in baptism," alludes to dipping---Many other significant rites they had; such as trine immersion, exorcism, breathing on the person, anointing him with oil, &c. These rites and ceremonies, though generally observed by the ancients, our opponents reject. And we have as good a right to use our liberty, as to the mode of baptism, whatever the ancient custom might be.

But it may be said, "that these rites are improper, and savour "of superstition, which cannot be said of immersion." I answer, though I believe that immersion may be administred, and received without superstition; yet a preferring of immersion to sprinkling, as being a more valid, efficacious or perfect baptism, does, I think, really savour of superstition. And as it is certain that superstitious opinions and practices were early received in the church, particularly with respect to baptism; so it seems to have been owing to superstition that dipping was originally preferred to sprinkling. Religious purifications, by washing with water, were common among both Jews and Gentiles. In these it was customary, as we are informed, that the person be stripped naked, and his whole body bathed. Now it seems very probable, that many converts to christianity, not altogether clear of those superstitious conceits, which they had imbibed from Judaism and Gentilism, might imagine, that there was some natural virtue in the christian baptism, like what they had been wont to conceive was in the lustrations they had formerly practised: and that its purifying efficacy would be greater if they were dipped, than if they were only sprinkled, greater if they were baptized naked, than in their clothes. The better instructed christians might think it best to condescend to their prejudices, and bear the infirmities of the weak, in order to gain them over to the christian faith, and profession: And so by degrees that mode of baptism, which most resembled these lustrations, came to be generally practised; and a superstitious notion of its greater fitness and efficacy unto the proper ends of baptism was bred in the minds of many. Jewish and heathenish rites were adoped, and a christian significancy put upon them. The custom of receiving baptism naked, we all agree, was not of divine institution. It seems plainly to have sprung from Jewish and Gentile superstition. And from the same source it was, as we may well suppose, that dipping came to be so much practised in the ancient church: for we find that stripping and dipping constantly went together, and the one was thought as necessary as the other.

This seems to be the most probable account, why immersion was so much practised in the third and following centuries; for

till then, I find not whether baptism was generally administred in this mode. But however this may be, the ancient fathers agreed with us that sprinkling was a true and valid baptism; and that immersion was not essential. Let this be granted, and superstition avoided, and we plead for no more.

THE SECOND PART.

On the SUBJECTS of BAPTISM.

SECTION I.

THE second part of the argument in hand, was to consider who are the proper subjects of baptism, or to whom this ordinance is to be administred. It is to be observed that a person may be considered as being a proper subject of baptism in two respects; that is, either really, and in the sight of God, or visibly, and in the account of the church, judging according to the rules of the gospel. No one ought to offer himself to baptism, while he is really and in the sight of God unmeet for it. But the church are to admit all those who according to the rules of the gospel, appear to them to be proper subjects, whether they are indeed such as they appear to be or not. It is none of our concern to search the hearts of men. The tree is to be judged of by the fruits which are visible. If hypocrites feign themselves to be believers and saints, and nothing appears to the church but that they may be sincere in their profession, they are to be received as believers. Thus Ananias, Sapphira, Simon Magus, and many others, were received into the church; notwithstanding their hearts were not right before God. We have no reason to perplex ourselves with surmises, that the church is defiled by having close hypocrites in its bosom. If none are admitted, or suffered to remain in its communion, unless they be such as by rule of the gospel are visible saints, we shall never be blamed by Christ. This rule, duly observed, will keep the church as pure as Christ designed it should be in this world.

Our present enquiry, concerning the subjects of baptism, is not so much, Who are really such in the sight of God? but, Who they are that, according to the gospel rule, are to be admitted by the church? In answer to which, we say, that all who make a credible

dible profession of faith, are proper subjects, together with their infants, or children in minority. It is agreed, that professed believers are subjects of baptism. And that this ordinance is not to be administred to one of adult age, unless he has in some manner made a credible profession of faith. But that the infants of members of the visible church are to be received as members also, and as the proper subjects of baptism, has been denied by some; and the administring the ordinance to such infants, has been censured as irregular, unwarrantable, of no validity or advantage.

I shall therefore endeavour to prove and vindicate the "divine "right of infant baptism," as briefly and plainly as I can; leaving out those collateral questions, which have often been discused by those who have undertaken to treat this subject at large. By means of these the lines of defence have been so enlarged, and the argument has become so complicated that many are lost in it, not being able to comprehend it, and carry it in mind.

In pursuance of this design, I shall, first, represent the chief and plainest reason, upon which I believe infant baptism to be a divine ordinance.--- Then I will consider the principal objections that are made to it---after which I may add some brief reflections and remarks on the whole.

But before I enter on the proof of the point before us, let it be observed and remembered---That there is nothing positive in the New Testament against infant baptism. It is no where said or hinted, that the Apostles forbid or refused, or declined to baptise infants; or that any child of a believer was, after he was grown up, baptized upon a profession of faith. It must also be acknowledged, that infants are capable not only of the outward sign of baptism, but also of having an interest in the blessings and Grace of the New Covenant, and coming under its bonds, which is the thing signified in the ordinance, and that they need those New Covenant blessings. Further, It is no where declared in scripture, either in express, or equivalent terms, that "adult persons only," or that "none but those who believe" or profess faith, are to be baptized. In short, there is absolutely and perfectly nothing that stands in the way of our embracing, the doctring of infant baptism, if we can find any kind of evidence in favour of it, either express or consequential---This then is what we have now to enquire into viz. Whether any such evidence appears? And I think enough may be collected from the scriptures to put the matter beyond all reasonable doubt.

And my first argument is taken from the church membership of infants. All those who are to be received as members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism---But the infants of the members of the visible church, are to be received as members of the visible church. They are therefore subjects of Baptism.

First. I say that all who are to be received as members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism. This is granted by,

our opponents, particularly by Dr. Gill moſt expreſsly. "Let "it be proved," ſays he "that infants are or ought to be mem- "bers of Goſpel churches--and we ſhall readily admit them," i. e. to baptiſm.--Anſwer to Dickinſon. p. 89.

Some have pretended "that it is inconſiſtent to ſay, that a right to baptiſm is grounded upon church membership, and yet that we are admitted into the church by baptiſm." But this is a mere cavil. The right of church membership is one thing; and admiſſion into the viſible church is another. They who are qualified for admiſſion into the church, according, to the rule of the goſpel, are members by right, before they are members by admiſſion. And they are accordingly to be received as right- ful members by baptiſm, and ſo admitted in an orderly way to thoſe ſubſequent privileges of chriſtian communion, to which baptiſm is a regular and ſolemn introduction. For the right of church membership, though it gives an immediate claim to ad- miſſion into the church by baptiſm, yet it does not give an im- mediate and orderly claim to any, while unbaptized, to all the privileges of admitted and baptized members. The inſtituted or- der of Chriſt's houſe is not to be neglected.---If any one ſhould come, and aſk for admiſſion into a family as a ſervant, and pro- duce the appointed token from the maſter, that he has taken him into his ſervice; ſuch a one is to be looked upon as belonging to the family, and is accordingly to be admitted. But if the orders of the houſe require that he firſt put on the badge, and livery of a ſervant, before he come to the table, then this order muſt be ob- ſerved. He has a right, as belonging to the family, to ſit at the table; but he ought to come according to order. The caſe is plain enough, if men would not make difficulties where there are none. But be this as it will, whether the right of church mem- berſhip be antecedent to baptiſm, or baptiſm be antecedent to church membership, it cannot be denied that all thoſe are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, who are, or ought to be admitted as members of the goſpel church.

Now if it can be made to appear, that the infants of church members are, or ought to be acknowledged and admitted as members of the viſible church, we muſt unavoidably conclude that they are ſubjects of baptiſm. And this is what I undertake to prove. And there is a remarkable paſſage recorded by three of the Evangeliſts which ſeems to be ſufficient to determine the point. I will recite it at large, collecting all the particulars men- tioned in the ſeveral accounts. Mat. xix. 13--15. Mark x. 13, 16. Luke xviii. 15, 16.---"And they brought unto him little "children, infants, that he ſhould touch them, put his hands on "them, and pray: And his Diſciples rebuked them, i. e. thoſe "who brought them. But when Jeſus ſaw it he was much diſ- "pleaſed, and called them to him, and ſaid unto them, ſuffer "the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of "ſuch

" ſuch is the kingdom of Heaven. Verily I ſay unto you, who-
" ſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child,
" he ſhall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms,
" put or laid his hands upon them, and bleſſed them."

Theſe were young " infant" children which were brought to Chriſt, whom he took up in his arms, as we are expreſsly told. They who brought them gave evidence of their faith in him: for they brought them that he might put his hands on them and pray.---They were members of the church and kingdom of God themſelves, from which they had not cut themſelves off by manifeſt unbelief---Whether theſe children were their own (as is moſt probable) we need not take upon us to determine. They were without doubt children of the covenant. We may alſo, obſerve, that it was agreeable to the mind of Chriſt that they ſhould be brought to him; for when the diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought them, Jeſus ſeeing it, was much diſpleaſed. The diſpoſition they manifeſted on this occaſion to deſpiſe little ones, and ſet themſelves above them, as if young children were not fit to be introduced into their company, Chriſt did much diſlike. And he was alſo diſpleaſed, as it ſeems, to find that they were ſo dull of underſtanding, and ſo much miſtaken in their apprehenſions. They might reaſonably have concluded, that as little children always had been received as members of the church of God, as Chriſt had not intimated any deſign to cut them off from this their right, as they needed his bleſſing, and were capable of it; on theſe grounds they ought to have concluded, that it was fit and proper that they ſhould be preſented to the Meſſiah, the king of Iſrael, as his diſciples and ſubjects, that they might receive his bleſſing---But the diſciples ſeem to have reaſoned in a quite different manner, as ſome others have done ſince. " To
" what purpoſe is it to bring theſe little children hither? They
" are not capable of being taught. They do not underſtand what
" is intended to be done with them. It will be of no advantage
" to them. We cannot look upon them to be believers, or fit
" to belong to our ſociety." Such thoughts as theſe they ſeem to have had. For our Saviour's words on this occaſion are as plain and pointed as poſſible againſt this error---Their miſtake at this time gave our Lord a fit occaſion to declare his mind fully and expreſsly upon the caſe of infants; that they are of the kingdom of heaven; and therefore none ſhould forbid, or diſcourage any from bringing and preſenting them to him. " Suffer
" little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of
" ſuch is the kingdom of heaven."

From theſe words it appears, in the firſt place, that thoſe infants which were brought to Chriſt, and other infants who like theſe, were the children of the covenant, belong to the church of God: for this is what we are here to underſtand by the kingdom of heaven, as I ſhall ſhew preſently. Such as theſe properly and

naturally ſignifies, perſons of this ſort or claſs, and that come under this denomination---Such children as theſe, and the children that were brought to Chriſt were certainly ſuch: They were included among that ſort of perſons; even as the woman taken in adultery was one of thoſe condemned by that law, "which commanded that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned."

Some would fain have the meaning of this expreſſion to be, "that thoſe who reſemble little children in humility belong to "the kingdom of heaven." But how ſtrained and unnatural is this? Chriſtians are to reſemble lambs and doves for meekneſs, as well as infants. But what ſhould we think of a man that ſhould ſay to his ſervant: "Suffer the ſheep and lambs to come to me, and hinder them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven."---Would not this be highly improper, and worſe than ridiculous. And yet this would be juſt as proper as the words of Chriſt are, according to the meaning that theſe would force upon them---The reaſon Chriſt gives why the little children ſhould be brought to him, is, becauſe of Such is the kingdom of God.---And a very plain and pertinent reaſon it is, as we underſtand it. For if children belong to the kingdom of Chriſt, we can ſee a manifeſt fitneſs that they ſhould be preſented to him as his ſubjects and people, that he might own them, and give them his bleſſing. But what weight or pertinency is there in ſuch a reaſon as our adverſaries would aſſign for bringing theſe children to Chriſt? "Suffer little children to come to me, for though it is "true they belong not to my kingdom, yet the ſubjects of my "kingdom are ſomewhat like them. There is that in little "children which looks like meekneſs and humility, and is a fit "emblem of it." Muſt every thing then that any ways reſembles true chriſtians, be brought to Chriſt, for him to lay his hand upon it, and pray over it? What an uncouth, unintelligible reaſon is this for bringing children to Chriſt? Which will ſerve as well for a reaſon why lambs and doves ſhould be brought and preſented to him, as Mr. Henry well obſerves. Becauſe the kingdom of God conſiſts of grown perſons, meek and harmleſs like children, is it a juſt and plain conſequence, that children ſhould be brought and preſented to Chriſt; though they belong not to his kingdom? Surely no one has any cauſe to be angry with another (as Chriſt was with his diſciples) for not apprehending weight in ſuch a reaſon as this. Indeed there is no weight in it.

Again, The reception which Chriſt gave theſe children, and his actions towards them, may put it out of all doubt that he acknowledged them as the ſubjects of his kingdom. For he took them in his arms, put his hands upon them, and bleſſed them. Chriſt never pronounced a ſolemn bleſſing upon any but thoſe whom he owned as the ſubjects of his kingdom. By laying his hands on theſe children and bleſſing them, he recognized them as

his

his own people and put upon them the ſame token of acknowledgment which he gave his diſciples immediately before his aſcenſion. The bleſſing was always looked upon as a ſacred thing, which belonged only to the profeſſed worſhippers and people of God; eſpecially that ſolemn religious bleſſing in the name of God, with impoſition of hands, which had been practiſed in the church in all ages. None were the ſubjects of this, upon any occaſion that we read of, but they that belonged to the church. When we read that God bleſſed Noah, and Abraham, and the other patriarchs, we have no doubt but that hereby he owned them, in the moſt ſolemn manner, as his people. And ſhall any be ſo unreaſonable as to deny or call in queſtion the church membership of infants, after Chriſt himſelf has not only declared that of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven, but has given this further token and teſtimony of the ſame, even laying on his hands, and pronouncing a bleſſing upon them: Which is as diſtinguiſhing a token of church membership as baptiſm itſelf, or any other ordinance whatever.

Theſe infants then, and ſuch as theſe muſt be allowed to belong to the kingdom of heaven. Chriſt has declared them ſo by words and actions as ſignificant as poſſible. But, it may be enquired, What are we to underſtand by the kingdom of heaven? I anſwer, it is plainly the Church that is here meant.---It will be needleſs to confirm this by particular quotations; they are ſo many and ſo well known to all who have read the New Teſtament, with any attention. Nor is it denied by any that I know of. But as the kingdom of heaven ſometimes ſignifies the viſible church, or kingdom of grace upon earth, and ſometimes the kingdom of glory in heaven; it may be enquired, whether it be the church on earth, or in heaven, that is here intended?

Now, I think it will appear, it is the Viſible Church that is to be underſtood, if the following things are well conſidered. 1. Our Saviour generally uſes the phraſe in this ſenſe. There are but few examples, comparatively, can be found, but ſuch as muſt neceſſarily, or may conveniently be underſtood of the kingdom of grace. Thus, the kingdom of heaven, the viſible church, is like a field ſown with wheat and tares. It is like a net, which enclоſed good fiſhes and bad. It is like ten virgins, five wiſe and five fooliſh. It was come to the Jews; and was within them, that is, among them; though it came not with obſervation. 2. It is the viſible church alone, and its members, who are the proper ſubjects, to whom the outward ordinances, rites, and tokens of church membership are to be adminiſtred and applied. There is no goſpel rule or precedent for admitting or acknowledging any as belonging to the church of God, unleſs there be an external and viſible ground for it.

If thoſe infants which were brought to Chriſt, did belong to the invisible church, and were elected into the kingdom of glory,

yet

yet this being a ſecret, could be no peculiar reaſon why they ſhould be preſented to Chriſt to receive his bleſſing: Nor could it be any reaſon why the diſciples ſhould not forbid their coming, till they knew that they were appointed to be heirs of the kingdom of glory: Nor could this be the reaſon why Chriſt was ſo diſpleaſed with his diſciples for oppoſing their being brought to him, as he had never told them ſo, and it was impoſſible that they ſhould know it otherwiſe. But the diſciples did know that infants had always been admitted as members of the church. And Chriſt had never intimated any deſign of cutting them off. And if they ſtill belonged viſibly to the kingdom of God, they ought not to be hindred from coming to Chriſt, to receive his bleſſing. --- He was therefore diſpleaſed, that they ſhould treat them as aliens, who did not belong to him, by keeping them back from coming to him. Chriſt's bleſſing theſe children, was an outward token that they were members of his viſible church. Though Chriſt ſearched and knew the hearts of all the children of men, and who were the heirs of eternal life, yet he outwardly acknowledged and received as members of his kingdom, only ſuch as were viſibly ſo, according to the ſame rule which he has given to thoſe who cannot judge of ſecret things. He never gave the outward tokens of church membership, to any as belonging to the kingdom of glory, or the inviſible church; but as belonging to the kingdom of grace. But the outward tokens of church membership were given to theſe infants, becauſe they belonged to the kingdom of heaven. Which, I think, fairly proves, that it is the viſible church which is here intended by "the kingdom of heaven." 3. Chriſt declares, that theſe children, and ſuch as theſe, were then members of the kingdom of heaven. "Of ſuch is the kingdom of hea-"ven." But, will any ſay, that the kingdom of glory conſiſts of thoſe who are here upon earth? They were upon earth, and were in the kingdom of heaven upon earth, if they were in it at all; that is, in the kingdom of grace or viſible church.

But, if it were ſuppoſed, that theſe words are to be underſtood as affirming, that theſe children, and ſuch as theſe, belong to the inviſible church, and as ſuch, are heirs to the kingdom of glory; yet this will prove that they ought to be acknowledged and received as members of the viſible church. For, can they be reaſonably refuſed a place in the church on earth, whom Chriſt affirms to be heirs of heaven? If we have evidence that they belong to Chriſt, as his peculiar people, there needs no more to give any one a clear and undoubted right, in the account of the church, to be received as belonging to him, or as members of the church on earth. And what better evidence can there be, that any are ſubjects of the kingdom of heaven, than the teſtimony of the king himſelf? Is there any profeſſion of faith that ought to have more credit in the church? Though infants are not able to ſpeak for themſelves, yet Chriſt has ſpoken for them, declaring, that

" of such is the kingdom of heaven." And, is not the testimony of Christ a sufficient credential to warrant our receiving them? Our Lord subjoins the following memorable words, in which he strikes at the very root of his disciples error, which their conduct discovered. " Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, " as a little child, shall not enter therein." The disciples were much disposed to stand upon their distinctions. They seemed to think that they had a clearer and better title to the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom than infants. They were actual believers and followers of Christ; which could not be said of babes. If these are admitted to have a part in this kingdom, it must be considered as a special indulgence and favour to them, who have done nothing to give them any claim to such a privilege. Whereas, thought they, we have left all for the kingdom of heaven's sake. And, shall these be allowed to have as good a title as we? " Yea, says Christ, their title is as good as yours in all respects." It is, indeed, an act of mere grace and favour, that infants are admitted. They have done nothing to merit it. And, do you imagine, that any thing that you have done gives you any peculiar claim to these privileges? Do you consider the kingdom of heaven as the due reward for any doings of yours? No, be it known to you, that your title arises entirely from the free grace and gift of God, as well as theirs. If you will not receive the kingdom of God, and hold it by the same title that little children do, (viz. as the free gift of God made over to them by his covenant and promise, as his adopted children) you shall not enter therein *.

The common exception, " That these infants were not baptized by Christ, nor were brought to him for any such purpose," is altogether impertinent. We do not argue, that infants are the subjects of baptism, because we suppose that these infants were baptized by Christ; but that such infants belong to the church, is here plainly asserted; and that all such as belong to the church, are the subjects of baptism, cannot be denied. It is further asked, " Why Christ did not then baptize them, if they were proper subjects?" Before men urge such questions, they should make it appear, that these infants had not been baptized before. However, whether they were baptized or not, is of no importance to us. If they were not baptized, it is not incumbent on us to give the reason. But it is incumbent on those who ask such questions, to shew. Why should it be thought necessary, that all members of the gospel church should then be baptized, before

* " Receiving the kingdom of God as a little child," is commonly explained to mean, receiving the privileges of the kingdom of heaven with humility, or a childlike temper. I think, it gives a sense more apposite to the occasion, if we understand the words as importing, that we must receive and hold the kingdom of heaven by the same right and title with children.

before baptiſm was fully ſettled as the ordinary rite of admiſſion, which was not till after Chriſt's reſurrection. But, if Chriſt did not baptize theſe children, yet he gave them as ſure a token of church membership as baptiſm itſelf, when he laid his hands upon them and bleſſed them. It is further objected, "Chriſt's entire ſilence about infant baptiſm at this time, has no favourable aſpect on ſuch a practice." Anſwer. Chriſt having aſſerted the church membership of infants, and ſolemnly bleſſed them with impoſition of hands, and having ſaid nothing againſt the baptiſm of them, more than of adults, theſe things have a very favourable aſpect on the practice of infant baptiſm, and imply a good warrant for it. After having thus owned them as his people, both by words and actions, if it had been his will that the ſacrament of induction ſhould not henceforth be adminiſtred to infants, as heretofore, but only to adults, he would not have failed to have given ſome intimation on this occaſion, that notwithſtanding what he had ſaid and done, infants were not to be baptized. Chriſt's ſaying nothing againſt infant baptiſm on this occaſion, when it appears ſo neceſſary to prevent miſtakes, had infant baptiſm been contrary to his will, has no favourable aſpect on the practice of thoſe who refuſe to admit them.

I have enlarged the more upon this proof of the church membership of infants, becauſe I take it to be very deciſive and unanſwerable. And, I ſhall lay before you another paſſage, which will fairly lead us to the ſame concluſion. Mark ix. 36, 37. "Jeſus took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them, and when "he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them; whoſoever "ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me." That this was a young child, appears from Chriſt's taking him up in his arms, and alſo from his propoſing him to his diſciples as a pattern and emblem of humility and meekneſs. But, grown children, that have attained to what we commonly call the age of diſcretion, to act perſonally for themſelves in matters of importance, are not wont to be held in the arms; nor are they fit emblems of humility and meekneſs like little children. [And if it ſhould be ſaid, "That theſe were little children that believed on Chriſt." I anſwer, The text ſays not ſo. It is true, we afterwards have an awful threatening againſt "thoſe that ſhall offend," or lay a ſtumbling-block, before "one of theſe little ones that be"lieve," as the words are tranſlated. But the original may as well be rendered, "one of theſe little ones of believers;" or, "one of the little ones, or children, of theſe believers." So that we may underſtand, not the little ones, but their parents, to be intended by thoſe who believe in Chriſt. And, if we ſuppoſe, that the character of believers is given to the little ones themſelves, it will make no difficulty. For, as it cannot be denied, that young children may have the ſeeds of grace and faith in them, before they are capable and fit to be admitted to make a perſonal profeſſion

ſeſſion of it to the church; ſo, being members of the church or ſociety of believers, (as has been proved, and ſhall further be manifeſted) they are, in the account and acceptation of the church, believers, according to their capacity, and may be ſo termed, even as we term them rational creatures, before the proper exerciſes of the rational faculties plainly appear. Nor can it be ſaid, that infants cannot be offended, or made to ſtumble, as the word ſignifies.---They are ſoon capable of being taught and led on to that which is evil, which, I ſuppoſe, is what is here mainly intended. So that I ſee not but that thoſe little ones, whom Chriſt cautions us not to offend, or cauſe to ſtumble, may properly be underſtood to be little children; and then we have a further proof that ſuch belong to the church. But, however this may be, that child which Chriſt held up in his arms, as an emblem and pattern of humility to his diſciples, was doubtleſs a little one.]

Now obſerve, Chriſt ſays, "Whoſoever ſhall receive one of "ſuch children," (or, "this child," as it is in Luke x. 48.) "in "my name, receiveth me." To receive one in the name of Chriſt, is to receive him as belonging to him. So the words are clearly explained in the 41ſt verſe of this chapter. "Whoſoever "ſhall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, becauſe ye "belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his re-"ward." Since then Chriſt would have us receive little children in his name, as belonging to him, and declares, that in ſo doing we receive him; we may aſſuredly conclude, that they are to be reputed as belonging to him, as the members of his church. When, therefore, a believer offers his child to the church, to be received by baptiſm, as belonging to Chriſt, and admitted as a member of the ſame body; Shall they refuſe to receive it in his name? Shall they thus deſpiſe Chriſt's little ones, as to ſhut the doors of his houſe upon them, and, as much as in them lies, "caſt them out of the inheritance of the Lord, and declare that "they have no part in the Lord, and lay ſuch a ſtumbling-block "before our children, to make them ceaſe from fearing the "Lord?" Joſh. xxii. 25. God forbid! Take heed that ye deſpiſe not, and offend not one of theſe little ones. It were better---

We have a further evidence, that infants are the proper ſubjects of church membership and baptiſm, in that they are expreſsly termed diſciples. It will be allowed, that all who are, or appear to be diſciples, are to be admitted as church members, and ſubjects of baptiſm. Now the apoſtle gives infants the title of diſciples, in Acts xv. 10. "Why tempt ye God to put a yoke "on the necks of the diſciples, which neither our fathers nor "we were able to bear." The yoke here mentioned was circumciſion, with the other Jewiſh ordinances, which the Judaizing teachers would have impoſed upon the Gentile converts, with their children. The Jews admitted none to circumciſion but

thoſe

thoſe whom they conſidered as proſelytes or diſciples of Moſes. Theſe Judaizing chriſtians contended only for the circumciſion of diſciples, or proſelytes to chriſtianity. They conſidered the children as diſciples. And the apoſtle accordingly reproves them for tempting God to lay a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples: So all thoſe are termed, for whom this yoke was deſigned by theſe Jewiſh teachers. And as this yoke was deſigned to be impoſed on children, as well as the parents; the apoſtle by terming them all diſciples indiſcrimmately and without exception, gives us to underſtand that the young children of believers are to be reckoned among the diſciples; even as among the Jews the children of proſelytes were always accounted proſelytes. In ſhort, if the Jewiſh teachers were for impoſing upon the Gentile converts, and their children, the yoke of circumciſion; and if the impoſing this yoke upon the children was a tempting of God, as well as the laying it upon adults, as all will allow; then it cannot be refuſed, that Peter acknowledges the children to be diſciples, as well as the parents. For ſuch are all they without exception for whom this yoke was deſigned, which the apoſtle remonſtrates againſt, as a tempting of God.

But it is objected, that "infants are not diſciples, inaſmuch as "they have not been taught; do not deny themſelves, take up "the croſs, and follow Chriſt; continue in his word; bear much "fruit, &c. which are ſaid down in ſcripture as the characters of "true diſciples." All this is nothing but thin ſophiſtry, and a wretched perverſion of the ſcriptures. It never has, nor will be proved, that no perſon can become, nor may be admitted a diſciple, till he is firſt taught. What is a diſciple, but one who is a pupil or ſcholar to another, in order that he may be taught? Infants belong to the ſchool of Chriſt, and are as really his diſciples or ſcholars, before they learned one leſſon, as a little child, is a diſciple or ſcholar of its tutor as ſoon as ever he is admitted, before he has been taught or learned any thing. A diſciple in the new teſtament is equivalent to a proſelyte. And it is well known that among the Jews the infant children were always admitted as proſelytes, together with the parents. When Chriſt ſays that a man cannot be his diſciple, unleſs he will forſake all, take up the croſs, follow him, continue in his word, bear much fruit, love one another, it is plain his words are only to be applied to adults; as appears from the context, as well as the reaſon of the thing. Luke xiv. 25. "He turned and ſaid to the multitudes, If "any man cometh to me, (which plainly deſigns an adult per-"ſon) and hate not his father, &c. he cannot be my diſciple." And again ver. 33. "Whoſoever he be of you (adults) that for-"ſaketh not all, &c. he cannot be my diſciple." And, can any one perſuade himſelf, or any other, that Chriſt's words are to be applied to infants, when he ſaid to his diſciples, John xiii. 35. "By "this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have

"love

"love one to another." Chap. xv. 8. "Herein is my Father glo-
"rified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."---
And when he told the believing Jews, "If ye continue in my
"word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John viii. 31. But if
these things are the indispensable conditions of discipleship to
grown persons; will it follow that infants are not to be admitted
as disciples unless these things are found in them? We might as well
argue, that infants may not eat, because they do not work, since
the apostle says, "He that will not work neither may he eat."
Nay further, it is not necessary that any one should first practise
all this self-denial, continue in the word of Christ, bear much fruit,
in order to his being admitted as a disciple by baptism. The apos-
tles baptized all that made a profession of faith immediately.
They did not wait to see whether they continued in the doctrine
of Christ, or bare much fruit, before they put the token of disci-
ples upon them. Yea there were many of Christ's disciples who
did not continue in his word, but went away and left him. Yet
till they fell away they were called and accounted disciples. The
meaning of these words of Christ is, "That his doctrine is a doc-
"trine of self denial; a practical institution, requiring us to bear
"much fruit, to continue in his word, to love one another, &c."
If we cannot learn and practise these things, it is in vain for us to
think of being his disciples: It will be to no good purpose to pre-
tend to it; nor may we be allowed to continue in his school or
church, but must expect to be expelled and cast out. Now, as
there are many adult persons admitted as disciples, who do not
answer the character of disciples indeed, so many who are admit-
ted in infancy do afterwards approve themselves good proficients
in these lessons of christianity. And we grant that these things
must be learned and practised by all, according to their capacity
and opportunities, in order to their answering the obligations of
true disciples, whether they were admitted in infancy or after-
wards.

Let us now consider more particularly the words of our text,
containing the Apostolic commission. "Go teach all nations,
"baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy
"Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have
"commanded you." It has been observed, that the words proper-
ly signify "Go make or admit all nations Disciples, baptizing
"them---teaching them, &c." This, our opposers do not deny.
But, they say, that no one can be made a disciple but by teaching:
which is true, only with respect to adults: because no "such
"persons" are to be admitted into the school of Christ, but by
their own consent, and a previous profession of their faith in him,
and obedience to him, and this necessarily pre-requires teaching.
But to argue from hence, that infants are not to be admitted as
disciples, because not in a present capacity of being taught, and
professing their faith, is no better then begging the question,

talking at random, not only without proof, but contrary to what has been juſt proved, viz. that "Infants are in fact accounted "and termed Diſciples; belong to Chriſt; and to the kingdom "of Heaven," all which are phraſes of the ſame import.---Though adults are not made Diſciples, till they are firſt taught, and are not admitted but upon a profeſſion of faith, yet with infants the caſe is otherwiſe. They are to be admitted upon the profeſſion of their parents, by the order of Jeſus Chriſt, without a perſonal "profeſſion and conſent," of which they are not capable. But this may be further conſidered afterwards.

Let us now ſee whether any thing can be argued from the words, in favour of infant diſcipleſhip and baptiſm.---When the Apoſtles received an order to diſciple all nations, they would naturally underſtand, that they had it in charge to make all nations proſelytes, to introduce and admit them into the church of Chriſt, as a ſchool, in which they were to be taught and trained up in the knowledge, and obſervance of chriſtianity, in order to their being meet for heaven. 'Tis true neither infants nor adults are expreſsly named. But the Apoſtles were ſent to diſciple and baptize "the nations," which none can deny, include perſons of every age. And the Apoſtles muſt needs have underſtood that it was their buſineſs to make Diſciples of the infants, and baptize them as well as others. For, Firſt, It would not otherwiſe be poſſible that their orders and commiſſions could be executed, or ſo much as one nation be proſelyted to Chriſt to the end of the world, unleſs all the young children were removed out of it. Children, in minority, make up a great part of every nation.---If theſe cannot be made diſciples, it will forever be an impoſſibility that any nation ſhould become diſciples, unleſs we can find a nation without children. And as all who are not the diſciples of Chriſt belong viſibly to the kingdom of Satan, the adverſary will hold a large part of the world viſibly under his dominion; from which he cannot be ejected.---And it would be impoſſible that that word ſhould be fulfilled, "The kingdoms of the world are become the "kingdom of the Lord and his Chriſt." Secondly, Let it be remembered that the Apoſtles had been educated in the Jewiſh church, of which infants had all along been undoubted members. They underſtood that the membership of ſuch had never been called in queſtion, ſince there had been a church in the world. They knew that the infants of proſelytes from among the Gentiles were conſtantly admitted and circumciſed, together with their parents. Not only ſo, but ſuch infants were baptized; as the ancient Jewiſh report. They knew that Chriſt had taught them that little children belonged to the kingdom of Heaven; that he had accordingly laid his hands, and pronounced a ſolemn bleſſing upon them; and ſignified his will that they be received in his name, as belonging to him; and that themſelves had been reproved by him for forbidding infants to be brought to

receive

receive his bleſſing. They knew, that the admiſſion of the children into the church, with the parents, was always reckoned a great privilege; that Chriſt never ſaid or intimated that it was his will that infants ſhould be cut off, or not admitted ſtill as members of the goſpel church. They underſtood that the privileges of the church were to be enlarged, and not abridged in any reſpect.---Now, the Apoſtles, whoſe views and apprehenſions may have been ſuch as has been repreſented, would, without doubt, have underſtood that they were inſtructed by their commiſſion to admit the children with the parents, into the number of proſelytes by the initiating rite, as had been the conſtant practice of the church.---They muſt have underſtood the matter as a miniſter, who had never heard that infant baptiſm was ever objected to, would underſtand his charge, if he was ordained and ſent out to preach to the heathen, and gather churches among them, baptizing them. It would be unnatural, and highly unreaſonable for them to underſtand the matter otherwiſe. This then muſt be received as the juſt interpretation of the commiſſion. It is the natural and true meaning: Which is ſo far from cutting off infants from the goſpel church, that it furniſhes us with a good warrant for admitting them.

We have another unanſwerable proof, that the children of believers are members of the viſible church, and ſubjects of baptiſm, in 1 Cor. vii. 14. "The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by "the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband: "Elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy." The Apoſtle had juſt ſaid, that a believer ought not to ſeparate from an unbelieving conſort, who was willing to continue in the marriage relation. And in theſe words he removes a doubt, which might be apt to ariſe in their minds, viz. Whether the children born in ſuch a marriage were to be reckoned as belonging to the church, with the believing parents; or were to be ranked with the unbelieving parent, and ſo reckoned among heathens that were without?---Though infants had always been received as members of the Old Teſtament church, yet when the Jews had, in the time of Ezra married ſtrange wives, which had born them children, theſe children were not received; but it was ordered that they be put away, together with their heathen parents, as unclean. It might therefore be a ſcruple whether a believer, and member of the Chriſtian church, were obliged or allowed to live in the ſtate of marriage with an unbeliever; and whether their children were not to be excluded from the church, as the unclean offſpring of a heathen parent; as had been determined among the Jews in the caſe juſt mentioned. This point, the apoſtle plainly reſolves, declaring, that a believer is not defiled by having conjugal ſociety with an unbeliever. On the contrary, ſays he, "The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife," or rather is ſanctified in or to the wife, "and the unbelieving wife

is sanctified in or to the husband." That is, the believer, has a lawful and sanctified enjoyment of an unbelieving yoke-fellow. For, as the apostle elsewhere teaches us, "All things are pure "to him that is pure. And every creature of God is good, and "nothing to be refused. For, it is sanctified by the word of God "and prayer." Thus the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified to the believer, as every creature of God is, which we may have occasion to use. Formerly, all that were out of the pale of the church were accounted unclean; and a Jew would have been defiled by living with a heathen consort. But now there is no defilement in the lawful use of any of God's creatures. They are all sanctified to a believer. Or we may take the meaning of these words thus: A believer and unbeliever being married together, are one flesh: They are one principal or source of offspring. But though an unbeliever, considered in himself personally, is unholy, and has no claim to church privileges; yet the children are intitled to these privileges, as fully and perfectly in all respects, as if both the parents were believers. For the unbelieving husband being one flesh with the believing wife, is sanctified in or by her, so far as respects the propagation of children. The husband, though an unbeliever, is, in consequence of his union in marriage with a believer, in some sort sanctified. The one flesh constituted by the marriage union is, as I may say, entirely sanctified; and not a coalescence or conjunction of unholy and holy. The unbeliever, in this relation is capable of propagating a holy seed, and transmiting church privileges to his offspring, to as good advantage as any believer.

The apostle goes on---"Else were your children unclean," as the heathen were termed and accounted. All those who were aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of the promise, and not members of the church of God, were commonly reputed uncircumcised and unclean. They were not admitted into the holy place, or to attend on holy ordinances. Now, if the unbelieving consort were not sanctified to and by the believer, as has been said, the children must have been unclean, and so not be received as members of the church, and subjects of holy ordinances.---"But now they are holy."--They have the denomination of saints, or holy ones: And are to be admitted into the visible church, into the society and fellowship of those who are visibly separated from the rest of the world, and devoted to God as his holy people. The word, Holy, as it is used in scripture, is applied to persons and things that are devoted and dedicated to God. Men are termed holy either as being separated from the rest of mankind, and standing in a peculiar relation to God, as his visible professing people; or as being conformed to the will and moral image of God in temper and practice. The one is called a relative, the other an inherent holiness. The first is attributed to all those who belong to the visible church. Thus the

the people of Iſrael are all ſpoken of as an holy people. And, upon the ſame account, goſpel churches are conſidered as conſiſting of ſaints or holy perſons. For, though it is not ſuppoſed that they are all really and inherently holy, or partakers of a divine nature, yet they are viſibly the people of God, ſeparated and devoted to him. But let it be particularly noted, that no perſon is ever ſtiled holy from the beginning to the end of the bible, except he be of the church of God. And in the new teſtament, a Saint or Holy Perſon, a Diſciple of Chriſt, a Member of the Church, and a ſubject of the Kingdom of Heaven are of the ſame ſignification. Now, ſince we find that the title or appellation of Holy is never given to any perſon in the world, except he be of the church; and ſince the apoſtle declares, that the children of believers are holy; it is a plain and undeniable conſequence, that ſuch children are of the church, and ſo are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, as was to be proved.

The Antipedobaptiſts have endeavoured, in vain, to wring and wreſt theſe words of the apoſtle to a compliance with their tenets.---But, in the firſt place they would perſuade us, "That the "Holineſs which the apoſtle here intends, cannot be that which "is implied in, and connected with church membership.---For, "they ſay, the ſame Holineſs which is aſcribed to the children, "is alſo attributed to the unbelieving parent---If the children are "Holy, the unbelieving huſband and wife are alſo ſaid to be "Sanctified." But, I anſwer, the apoſtle's words plainly ſhew, that the unbelieving yoke-fellow is only ſanctified to the believer, as all the creatures of God are ſaid to be ſanctified to the Saints, ſo as that they may have a holy uſe and enjoyment of them. Or, He is only ſo ſanctified by becoming one fleſh with a believer, that he is capable of propagating a holy ſeed. He is not ſanctified in reſpect to God, but only in reſpect to his conſort and offſpring, who derive no more defilement either by conjugal cohabitation with or by natural generation from him, than if he were a believer.---In a word, the unbelieving huſband is only Sanctified in that particular reſpect, and unto the particular purpoſe there pointed at, as has been ſaid.---But the Children are declared to be not unclean, but "Holy, or ſaints." A title which is never given to any but thoſe that are of the church. Unbelievers who belong not to the church may be ſanctified, or prepared as inſtruments to anſwer the purpoſes of divine goodneſs to the ſaints. But this reſpective ſanctification does never give them the denomination of "Holy ones, or Saints." The words of the text, and the reaſon of the thing therefore plainly ſhow, that the Sanctification of the unbelieving huſband or wife is a different thing from the holineſs of the children.---This gives a good, pertinent and inſtructive ſenſe to the apoſtle's words, which are taken and explained in the ſcriptural ſenſe, as no doubt they ought to be. And if the holineſs of the children is ſuppoſed to

ſignify ſomething different from the ſanctification of the unbelieving parent, it need not ſtumble us, ſuch variations are obſervable in other places, where the ſame word bears a ſomewhat different meaning in different parts of the ſame ſentence. See John xvii. 19. "For their ſakes I Sanctify myſelf, that they alſo might be Sanc-"tified through the truth." Tit. i. 15. "Unto the pure all things "are pure." Before, according to our adverſaries interpretation, the words, Sanctified and Holy, bear a very different meaning; the one Signfying, "married," the other, "Legitimate."

And hence we ſee, there is no juſt foundation for that objection, "That the unbelieving parent being ſanctified by a believ-"ing yoke-fellow, may as well be concluded to be a member of "the church and ſubject of baptiſm, as the children whoſe holi-"neſs depends upon this ſanctification of the parents." For a perſon's being ſanctified in ſome certain reſpect, does not give him the denomination of a Saint, or holy one, in the language of the ſcriptures; which is a peculiar and appropriate title of thoſe who belong to the church, and is never given to any others of the children of men. And, ſince the children are Holy, or Saints, which is not ſaid of the unbelieving parent, though in ſome reſpect ſanctified; the children are to be acknowledged as of the church, but not the unbelieving parent.

Nor is there any more reaſon in what is further urged, "That "we may as well argue from theſe words of the apoſtle, that "children of a believer, though forty or fifty years old, are to be "accounted holy and received into the church, without a per-"ſonal profeſſion of faith, as that infants are to be ſo accounted "and received; ſince they are all alike children, and intitled to "the rights and privileges of children." For, though it is true, that the word Children does not determine their age, yet what the apoſtle ſays of them, ſhews, that he means only children in minority, as plainly as when he gives it in charge to fathers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. For they are therefore accounted and ſtiled holy and not unclean, becauſe one of the parents at leaſt is a believer. But this reaſon holds only with reſpect to ſuch as are in their minority. Such children as are of age cannot be concluded to be unclean or out of the church, though both the parents are unbelievers, and unſanctified. For, adult children may act for themſelves and be admitted into the church upon a perſonal profeſſion of faith. And on the other hand, it cannot be concluded with any certainty, that adult children are holy, though the parents are believers. For the children may live in open infidelity. The connection between the faith and ſanctification of the parents, and the holineſs of the children, which the apoſtle aſſerts, holds only with reſpect to infants or minors; which is a clear proof that theſe only, and not adults are, the children here ſpoken of.

Let

Let us now conſider how this paſſage is expounded by thoſe on the other ſide. And here they would perſuade us, "that the "apoſtle means, what they call, a matrimonial holineſs." And that the meaning of the text is, "The unbelieving huſband is married or eſpouſed to the wife, and the unbelieving wife, married to the huſband: elſe were your children baſtards, but now are they legitimate." I do not think it will be needful to ſay much to expoſe the unreaſonableneſs of this interpretation. It is ſo ſtrained and unnatural, it ſo ſinks and ſpoils the ſenſe, and is ſo utterly without foundation, that I think it may paſs for one of the moſt improbable, unhandſome, and incredible gloſſes, that we ſhall readily meet with upon any text whatever. The notion of perſons being ſanctified, in any ſenſe, by marriage has no ſort of foundation in the ſcriptures; which never once uſe the words Sanctified, or Holy, to ſignify thoſe who are married. And, if the Jewiſh Rabbies have ſometimes uſed the Hebrew word which uſually ſignifies a Sanctifying to expreſs marriage; this is a modern, and not a ſcriptural ſenſe, and is not to be regarded, But whatever the Hebrew word may import in the Rabbinical writings, it is only the Greek words, Hagiazo and Hagios, that we are concerned with. And it has not yet been found, that theſe have ever been uſed to denote either a marrying, or being legitimate. In ſhort, our opponents have had the boldneſs to fix a meaning to the apoſtle's words wholly different from the ſenſe which the words bear in any part of the ſcripture: A meaning unſupported by any good authority, or parallel example in any Greek writer, ſacred or profane. And eſpecially, that the word Hagios, Holy, which is predicated of the children; ſhould ſignify legitimate is, for what yet appears, quite without example. Let the pretence then of Matrimonial Sanctification and Holy Legitimacy, go for an idle figment, and be exploded with juſt indignation and contempt *. Beſides, according to this interpretation of the text, the ſenſe will be very poor, trifling and uninſtructive: and the apoſtle's reaſon againſt a believers ſeparating from an unbelieving conſort will turn out weak and impertinent. Neither the Corinthians, nor any one elſe doubted, or had need to be told, that the unbelieving huſband had been and was married to the wife, and the unbelieving wife to the huſband. For, how could they be huſband and wife, if they had not been married together?

* The only places of ſcripture I have ever ſeen brought to ſupport this ſtrange ſenſe, which is invented and put on the word, Holy, are Ezra ix. 2. Mal. ii. 15. Where mention is made of The Holy Seed, and, A Godly Seed. But we have not the leaſt reaſon to imagine that their legitimacy is what is intended by theſe epithets. They are plainly termed a Holy Seed, and a ſeed of God, not becauſe they were legitimate, but becauſe they were of the church, the viſible people of God.

gether? And, can any one believe in ſober earneſt, that the inſpired apoſtle filled up his epiſtle with ſuch a trifling ridiculous buſineſs, as telling his converts, that if they had children without being married, the children would be baſtards, but now as they had been married, they were legitimate! Far be it from any chriſtian to burleſque the ſacred ſcriptures, at this rate---It is mere traveſty---A profane infidel, who would ridicule the apoſtle could ſcarce give his words a meaner, and more ludicrous turn.

But, it may be ſaid, "That the Corinthians doubted whether a believer were not looſed from the bond of marriage to an unbeliever, and conſequently at liberty to ſeparate." I anſwer, if this were the doubt, the apoſtle's ſaying, "That the unbeliever "is married to the believer," was not to the purpoſe of determining, that a believer ought to cohabit with an unbeliever. This would be only ſaying, that the marriage contract is binding upon the unbelieving party; and conſequently, that an unbeliever ought not to ſeparate from a believer. But this will not prove but that the believer may be at liberty, notwithſtanding, and that it may be expedient for him to forbear cohabitation with an infidel. Nor can it be ſaid, that if one party be bound, the other cannot be at liberty. For, it is well known, that in ſome caſes, the one party may be at liberty to repudiate the other, and yet that other party may not be at liberty till after an actual divorce. So that the apoſtle's reaſon againſt a ſeparation of the marriage union between a believer and an unbeliever, according to the Antipedobaptiſts, will only prove that an unbeliever ought not to repudiate a believer; which every one ſees, was not the point he was conſidering; which was, whether a believer ought to part from an unbeliever. And according to the meaning they put upon the apoſtle's words, his reaſon ought to have ſtood thus, in order to its having any pertinency in it: "The be-"lieving huſband is bound in marriage to the unbelieving wife, "and the believing wife to the unbelieving huſband." Whoever was the author of this uncouth invention, it is certainly a great injury to the apoſtle, to imagine, that ſo poor a ſentiment, and ſuch left handed reaſoning, could fall from his divine pen.

SECTION II.

THAT the infant ſeed of believers are members of the church, and ſubjects of baptiſm, further appears from their intereſt in that gracious covenant, by which the church is conſtituted. To ſtate and clear up this argument at full length, would require a large diſcourſe. I muſt only give a brief ſketch.

I think it is granted, that all who are viſibly intereſted in the new covenant, are to be received as members of the viſible church: and that the outward token of an intereſt in the covenant,

nant, and of admiſſion into the viſible church belongs to them. After the fall of man, by the breach of the firſt covenant, God was pleaſed to reveal a new and gracious covenant, of which Chriſt was the Mediator; which was to be the rule of intercourſe and communion between God and his people, and the great charter by which the church was formed. All who were taken into this covenant were thereby ſeparated from the reſt of mankind, and brought into a peculiar relation to God, as his people and ſubjects, to be ruled by the ſpecial laws, and obſerve the ſpecial ordinances, and enjoy the ſpecial privileges of his kingdom. This kingdom of grace was to make an outward appearance upon earth, and have an outward adminiſtration in the viſible church, according to the rules which God ordained. And according to theſe rules, all who were viſibly in the covenant, were to be admitted as members of the viſible church. They were to have the appointed token of the covenant put upon them, and were viſible ſubjects of the outward ordinances and privileges of the church. For, a viſible intereſt in the covenant, a right of memberſhip in the viſible church, a right to the token of the covenant and of church memberſhip, and to the outward ordinances and privileges, which, according to the covenant, belong to the church; theſe things are inſeparably connected together, and mutually infer each other. Many, it is true, who are in the covenant viſibly, and in the acceptation of the church, have not a real and ſaving intereſt in new covenant bleſſings. They will not at laſt be owned by God as his peculiar people; nor is there a ſpiritual, effectual, and ſaving application of the grace of the new covenant to them. Hence ariſes the common diſtinction between the viſible, and the inviſible church. But the outward ordinances of the church are to be adminiſtred to all, and only thoſe, who are viſibly in the covenant, and of the church.

Now, if this covenant, by which the church is formed and conſtituted, includes the children with the parents, then theſe children belong to the church; and the token of the covenant, and of admiſſion into the church, belongs regularly and viſibly to them. This then is the point we have to prove.

Let it be remembered, in the firſt place, that the ſuppoſition of infants being comprehended in the covenant, and being the ſubjects of its outward adminiſtration in the viſible church, is no ways incredible, on account of any incapacity in them. For, they are certainly capable of coming under its bonds, and having the grace of it ſecured and applied to them; and they greatly need new covenant bleſſings. It is an important privilege to them to belong to the viſible church, that they may, under its watch, inſtructions and diſcipline, be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They are alſo capable of having the outward token of the covenant put upon them; which may afterwards be improved by them for their excitement and encouragement in the

the ſervice of God. In ſhort, infants are, for ought that appears, as capable ſubjects as any of the obligations, the privileges, and token of the covenant; and they ſtand in like need thereof with others. The preſumption, therefore, is not at all againſt, but rather in favour of their being comprehended in the covenant, and in the church of God, as well as others.

We may further obſerve, that it has always been cuſtomary for children to be included in covenants with the parents; to come under the bonds, and receive the privileges therein ſtipulated. That this is common in covenants which take place among mankind is known to all; and no one imagines there is any thing unreaſonable and improper in it, if the covenant be in itſelf good and reaſonable. It is alſo certain, that when God has been pleaſed to covenant with mankind, the children as well as the parents have been comprehended. This appears to have been the caſe in the covenant with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, and with the Iſraelites at Horeb. Indeed, this ſeems to have been the caſe in all God's federal tranſactions with the children of men. It is, therefore, altogether agreeable to the common ſenſe of mankind, and the method of God's government of his people, that his covenant with them ſhould reſpect and take in both them and their ſeed. And this conſideration may, I think, render it quite credible, and ſomewhat probable, that the new covenant, by which the church is conſtituted, may be, in this reſpect, ſimilar to God's covenant tranſactions with mankind, which, ſo far as appears, have conſtantly comprehended the children with the parents.

But, having premiſed theſe obſervations, I ſhall proceed to the direct and poſitive proof, that the children of God's covenant people, have alſo an intereſt in the covenant. The new covenant, which, I have ſaid, is the great charter by which the church is formed, does moſt plainly and expreſsly take them in. It was, indeed, this new covenant I am ſpeaking of, that was revealed to our firſt parents the very day that they fell, and by the propoſal of it to them, they were conſtituted the viſible church and people of God, before they were expelled from paradiſe.---It was again revealed to Noah after the flood, whereby he, with his children, were again recognized by God as his church and people. The ſame covenant was afterwards more clearly and diſtinctly revealed to Abraham, and the ordinance of circumciſion was annexed, as an outward ſign and token. And though there are ſufficient intimations, that the ſeed of God's viſible and profeſſed people, had always, from the beginning, been conſidered as in the covenant, and church of God; yet as this is moſt expreſsly declared in the revelation which God made of his gracious covenant to Abraham, I ſhall take this more eſpecially as the ground of the preſent argument.

The

The Abrahamic covenant, I ſay, was but a plainer exhibition of that ſame new and gracious covenant, which had been all along the foundation and charter of the church. The addition of a new ordinance, and the grant of a particular country to him and his natural poſterity, made no alteration in its ſubſtantial duties, or privileges, but only pointed out a different external adminiſtration, which was to take place in the church. Hitherto the external admin ſtration of the church ſeems to have been domeſtic; the ordinances of worſhip being diſtinctly and ſeparately adminiſtred in the ſeveral families of the Patriarchs: nor do we read of ſolemn aſſemblies, for the purpoſe of attending public worſhip. But, as God had a deſign of forming a national church, of the poſterity of Abraham, all the members of which were to join and have an external communion with each other in the ſame ordinances, and acts of worſhip; this different mode of adminiſtration was provided for in the grant of the land of Canaan to the poſterity of Abraham; that ſo they might be formed into a political body, and live together, for their convenient attendance on holy ordinances. But this proviſion, which was made for a different external adminiſtration in the church, is no argument but that the covenant which was revealed to Abraham was, for ſubſtance, the very ſame with that by which the church had at firſt been formed, and had all along ſubſiſted.

This may ſhew how unreaſonably ſome would inſinuate, that we would make ſeveral covenants of grace. As if the ſame covenant could not be revealed "at ſundry times and in divers manners," and as if there might not be a different external adminiſtration of ordinances in the church at different times, and yet the covenant by which the church is conſtituted remain ſubſtantially the ſame.

Now, that we may diſtinctly ſtate this argument, grounded on the covenant with Abraham, let us take a view of it as we have it recorded in Gen. xvii. "I am the Almighty God, walk before "me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant be- "tween me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. As "for me, my covenant is with thee, and thou ſhalt be a father "of many nations. Neither ſhall thy name any more be Abram, "but thy name ſhall be Abraham; for a father of many nations "have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, "and I will make nations of thee, and Kings ſhall come out of "thee---And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee. "And thy ſeed after thee in their generations, for an everlaſting "covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. "And I will give unto thee and to thy ſeed after thee, the land "in which thou art a ſtranger; all the land of Canaan for an "everlaſting poſſeſſion, and I will be their God. Thou ſhalt "keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy ſeed after thee in "their generations. This is my covenant which ye ſhall keep

"between

" between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee: Every man
" Child among you ſhall be circumciſed. And ye ſhall circum-
" ciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin, and it ſhall be a token of the
" covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old
" ſhall be circumciſed among you, every man child in your ge-
" neration; he that is born in the houſe, or bought with money
" of any ſtranger which is not of thy ſeed. He that is born in
" thy houſe, and he that is bought with thy money, muſt needs
" be circumciſed; and my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh for an
" everlaſting covenant. And the uncircumciſed man child
" whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be
" cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant."

From this memorable paſſage, which I have recited at large, we ſee that the Abrahamic covenant comprehended the children with the parents, in their ſucceſſive generations; and that the outward token of an intereſt in the covenant was to be applied to infants. We may further obſerve, that all who were included in this covenant were by it conſtituted a viſible church, ſeparated from the reſt of the world to be the people of God. That grand article of the covenant, " I will be a God to thee and thy " ſeed," implies, that they were to ſtand in a peculiar relation to God, as his church; who were to be ſubject to peculiar laws and ordinances, by obſerving which, they declared on their part, That they were his People. This promiſe contains alſo the ſum of new covenant bleſſings. The promiſes and ordinances did appertain only to the church; of which all who had an intereſt in the covenant were members. Infants, therefore, being expreſsly included in the covenant, were always looked upon as of the viſible church and people of God; and were to receive the diſtinguiſhing token of a covenant dedication to him.

Nor was this covenant, with its ordinances and privilege ever limited to Abraham, and his natural poſterity; and particularly that article which takes the infant ſeed into the church with the parents, was not any peculiar privilege of the native Hebrews: nor was circumciſion appointed as the token of a peculiar intereſt in thoſe temporal bleſſings, which were granted excluſively to the natural ſeed of Abraham, as ſome would pretend. For it appears that by the expreſs direction of God ſome were to have the token of the covenant and of church membership for themſelves and their children, who were neither the natural deſcendants of Abraham, nor were with them to inherit the land of Canaan. When circumciſion was firſt inſtituted, not only Abraham, with his ſon Iſhmael, but all the males of his family were ordered to have this token of admiſſion into the viſible church. And it was a ſtanding rule, that bought ſervants, and children born in the houſe, ſhould be circumciſed. And the old Teſtament church did receive proſelytes from the Gentiles; and this token of their intereſt in the covenant of Abraham was accordingly

accordingly adminiſtred to them and their children; who were thereupon ſubjects of Church ordinances, and privileges. But this their intereſt in the covenant of Abraham gave them no right of inheritance with the native Iſraelites in the land of Canaan. Which I think is a clear proof, that the covenant with Abraham, to which circumciſion was annexed, was not any mere national covenant, conveying peculiar temporal privileges to him and his poſterity, but it could be no other than God's new and gracious covenant; by the revelation of which, thoſe who profeſſedly conſented to it, with their children, were conſtituted his viſible church and people, and were the regular ſubjects of the ordinances appertaining to its outward adminiſtration.

The Abrahamic covenant, we ſee, did comprehend both parents and their infant children, conſtituting them members of the viſible church. And not only the natural children of Abraham, but all that were afar off among the Gentiles, even as many the Lord ſhould call, upon their becoming proſelytes, profeſſing the faith and religion of the church, they and their infant children had an intereſt in the covenant of Abraham, and were to be received into the viſible church by the initiating rite. They were adopted into the family of Abraham, and, "the bleſſing of "Abraham came upon the Gentiles," and he was "made the "father of many nations," long before the goſpel diſpenſation took place, and before the diſſolution of the national hierarchy of the Jews, which was a middle wall of partition between them and the Gentiles. Even before this wall was taken away, there was a door left open in it, to receive all of every nation, who would join themſelves to the God of Abraham, and take hold of his covenant.

The church having been conſtituted, according to the covenant, with Abraham, it muſt be allowed, that during its continuance, the children are as evidently in covenant, and of the church, and ſubjects of the initiating ordinance, as any others. If then it ſhall appear, that this covenant ſtands now in force, and that the goſpel church is in and under it, and enjoys all its privileges without any abridgment; the church membership of infants, and their right to the token of admiſſion, will ſtand upon the ſame firm baſis, that it did under the Old Teſtament. But, if it ſhall appear, that the covenant with Abraham, is diſannulled, and that the church is now conſtituted upon a plan entirely new; then the intereſt of infants in the goſpel covenant, and their right of admiſſion into the goſpel church, can no otherwiſe be argued from the Abrahamic covenant, than by analogy, parity of reaſon, and ſuch like conſiderations; which, however probable, are ſcarce concluſive.

The adverſaries of infant church membership, would perſuade us, that this covenant, which included the infant children, was not God's new and gracious covenant with his church, but a ſpecial compact, containing a grant of mere outward and temporal pri-

vileges, long ſince aboliſhed*. That ſtupid and ridiculous pretence, that this was a covenant of works, I paſs over as unworthy of notice. Such wild, unſavoury notions muſt diſguſt all ſober Chriſtians. It is alſo ſaid, "That the covenant with Abraham cannot be the covenant of grace, becauſe it might be kept and broken by men; and included thoſe who were not ſaved; was not from everlaſting, but had its beginning in time; and men were in time taken into it, and put out of it, &c." I need not ſtay to canvaſs theſe things diſtinctly. However, the covenant of grace may be conſidered as from everlaſting in the divine decree; and, however inamiſſable we may ſuppoſe their intereſt in it to be, who are vitally united to Chriſt; yet, as to the external revelation, application, and adminiſtration of it in the viſible church, it is of no earlier a date than the viſible church which is formed

* Dr. Gill ſays, "That the covenant made with Abraham "was of a mixed kind; that it had promiſes and mercies of a "temporal nature, which belonged to his natural ſeed, and others "of a ſpiritual ſort, which belonged to his ſpiritual ſeed--The "latter are comprized chiefly in God being a God to him and them." Anſwer to Dickinſon. p. 48. But he denies, that this covenant, "ſo far as it was a covenant of grace," was made with his natural ſeed, as ſuch, or with the natural ſeed of believing Gentiles.

Now, if it appear that this article of the covenant, which comprizes ſpiritual bleſſings, belongs to the natural poſterity of Abraham, including their infants, it is then undeniable, even upon the Doctor's own conceſſion, that they have an intereſt in the covenant of Abraham, "as it is a covenant of grace." But this appears from Deut. xxix. 10, --13. "Ye ſtand this day all of you "before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your "elders, and your officers, with all the men of Iſrael, your little "ones, your wives, and thy ſtranger that is in thy camp, that "thou ſhouldeſt enter into covenant with the Lord thy God. "That he may eſtabliſh thee this day to be a people to himſelf, "and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath ſaid unto thee, "and as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, "and to Jacob." We ſee here, that the ſame covenant which God had ſworn to Abraham, and particularly that promiſe, "I "will be a God to thee," which comprizes ſpiritual mercies, as Dr. Gill juſtly owns, and is, according to him, a covenant of grace. This covenant, and this promiſe, is renewed to them, and "their "little ones in particular," are declared to be comprehended in it. The ſame promiſe is often repeated, and in the ſame extent. Jer. xxxi. 1. "At that time," which refers to the goſpel times, when they ſhould ſerve the Lord their God, and David their king, chap. xxx. 9. "ſaith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of "Iſrael, and they ſhall be my people." The families, therefore, which include the infant children, were to have an intereſt in the covenant

formed by it. And, it is certain, that unſanctified perſons may be regularly admitted to, and cut off from an external and viſible intereſt in the covenant, and right to ordinances. And this is that view of the covenant which comes under our preſent conſideration, as the ground of a viſible right to church privileges.

It is further objected, "That if the covenant with Abraham be not abrogated, as a part of the former adminiſtration, circumciſion muſt ſtill remain in force." But this conſequence we deny. How can it be made to appear, that the external adminiſtration of the viſible church cannot be changed, but by aboliſhing that gracious covenant, by which the church is formed; and ſo diſſolving the church itſelf. The apoſtles declare plainly, that we are free from the yoke of circumciſion. But that the covenant with Abraham is diſannulled, or curtailed in any of the privileges it conveyed to the viſible church, they never once intimate, but declare to the contrary, as we ſhall ſee preſently. We do not imagine, that the change of the Sabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt

covenant of grace. The new covenant was promiſed to the houſe of Iſrael and Judah, which muſt doubtleſs comprehend the children of their families. And, the ſame promiſe is made to them, "I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people," ver. 31. And, thoſe promiſes which peculiarly appertain to the covenant of grace, and contain a grant of ſpiritual bleſſings, are, in ſcripture, often made to the ſeed or natural poſterity of God's people. See Deut. xxx. 6. Iſai. xliv. 3, 4. Chap. lix. 21. And theſe bleſſings of the covenant of grace, made with Abraham, are come upon the Gentiles, or nations to whom Abraham is become a father, according to the divine promiſe, "That they might ob-"tain the promiſe of the Spirit through faith." They are, therefore, the privilege of us and our children, as ſhall afterwards be ſhewn. And, whereas it is objected, that all who have an intereſt in the covenant of grace, muſt needs be heirs of ſalvation, which we cannot think is the caſe of all the natural offſpring of church members: I ſhall only ſay, at preſent, though profeſſed believers and their children are alike intereſted in the covenant, and viſibly heirs of ſalvation, and as ſuch, the ſubjects of church ordinances; yet, this does no more inſure final ſalvation to all the children, than it does to all adult profeſſors. But this will be further conſidered in the ſequel. And, if the covenant of grace, in reſpect of its external adminiſtration, comprehends ſome who are not partakers of its ſpiritual and ſaving bleſſings, we have no more reaſon to think this ſubject incredible, than that the viſible church, which is the ſubject of ordinances, ſhould contain hypocrites. The rule God has given to direct us in our adminiſtrations, was never deſigned to make a perfect ſeparation of the elect from the reſt of mankind, in this world. This is none of our concerns. "The "Lord knoweth them that are his."

firſt day of the week, is any proof that the fourth commandment is repealed. How weakly then do men urge the change of the outward token of admiſſion into the church from circumciſion to baptiſm, as a proof that the covenant with Abraham is diſannulled.

But our opponents, "deny, that baptiſm comes in the room "of circumciſion." And if we ſhould ſuppoſe with them, that it does not, it would be no proof but that the covenant itſelf may remain, though the outward token be laid aſide, as it is certain that the ſame covenant for ſubſtance had been revealed to, and adminiſtred in the church, long before circumciſion was inſtituted. And if the covenant remain, infants are ſtill church members, and conſequently are the ſubjects of baptiſm, as all church members are allowed to be. But, indeed, it is no better than wrangling to deny that baptiſm comes in the room of circumciſion: What we mean by the aſſertion is, that circumciſion being abrogated under the goſpel diſpenſation, baptiſm was inſtituted to be an outward token of an intereſt in the new covenant, the ſacramental rite of admiſſion into the viſible church, the ſign and badge of memberſhip, even as circumciſion had been to the fathers; and in a word, that it anſwers the like purpoſes in the goſpel church, and is of like myſtical and ſpiritual ſignificancy, as circumciſion was under the former diſpenſation. And this I ſhould think our adverſaries can ſcarce deny. And, beſides, the apoſtle terms baptiſm the circumciſion of Chriſt, or the chriſtian circumciſion, Col. ii. 12. And he calls baptized chriſtians the Circumciſion under the goſpel, as the people of God had been wont to be ſtiled. Phil. iii. 3. And it is certain, that the primitive chriſtians viewed the matter in this light, and ſpeak of baptiſm as the goſpel circumciſion. But we may have occaſion to conſider this point further in the ſequel.

Indeed, as circumciſion was afterwards annexed to the Horeb covenant, and ſo became an ordinance of the national church, and worldly ſanctuary of the Jews, binding the ſubjects to the obſervance of the whole Moſaic law, in this relation and reſpect, it muſt of courſe have ceaſed with the other Jewiſh ordinances, when that old covenant was abrogated---And if our opponents only mean to deny, that baptiſm comes in the room of circumciſion, conſidered as a Moſaic ordinance, we ſhall not contend with them. But it ſhould be remembered, that circumciſion had been appointed as a token of the Abrahamic covenant, long before the Horeb covenant and national conſtitution of the church had a being. And I ſhall ſhew, that the Abrahamic covenant is the very ſame that the goſpel church is now under; and that it never was diſannulled. But as circumciſion had been annexed to the Horeb covenant, and ſo became a Moſaic ordinance, when God ſhook heaven and earth, and put an end to this old covenant, and the national hierarchy, he was pleaſed to lay circumciſion

cumciſion quite aſide, and appoint baptiſm in its ſtead, as the ſacrament of induction into his goſpel church. But that covenant which had been revealed to Abraham, and had been the foundation of the church from the beginning, was not ſhaken or made void, but confirmed; as we ſhall ſee.

It is objected, "That the apoſtle has declared, that the cove-
"nant, which was the foundation of the Jewiſh church, of
"which infants were members, is waxed old, and van ſhed
"away." Heb. viii. 8, 9. I anſwer, The covenant which the apoſtle ſays was ready to vaniſh, was that, which God made with the Fathers, in the day that he took them by the hand, to lead them out of Egypt; that is, the covenant at Horeb. But that covenant, which is the foundation of infant church membership had been revealed to Abraham hundreds of years before; and the apoſtle does not ſay, that this had waxed old, or was diſannulled; but the contrary. Infants were indeed members of the national hierarchy of the Jews, which is aboliſhed. But they had been church members long before this national church was formed; nor was the foundation of their membership ſhaken, when that diſpenſation was taken away.

There is another objection againſt our ſuppoſing that the Abrahamic covenant is that new covenant, which the goſpel church is under, which looks more plauſible; though I do not find, that our opponents have made uſe of it: And that is, "That the apoſtle calls the chriſtian covenant a new one, as
"compared with that old one, which was vaniſhing. But it ſeems
"we make this new covenant much older than the covenant of
"Horeb; even as old as Abraham, and nearly as old as the
"creation." But the anſwer is not difficult. Though the revelation of the new covenant was as early as the firſt conſtitution of a church in the world, and the grace and bleſſings of it reached backward to the fathers in the earlieſt ages; yet the covenant itſelf was not ratified and ſealed, till the ſhedding of Chriſt's blood. It was the death of the teſtator that confirmed the New Teſtament. This was long after the old covenant had been ratified and ſealed by the blood of beaſts. At the ſealing the new covenant, the old began to vaniſh. The apoſtle, therefore, very properly places the date of the new covenant at the time when it was ſolemnly ratified and ſealed, and not when it was firſt notified and promiſed. The efficacy of the new covenant, as well as of Chriſt's ſacrifice, extended to every paſt age of the church; and they who died long before this ſacrifice was offered, and this covenant ſealed, had an intereſt in them.---Briefly then, the death of Chriſt, inſtead of diſannulling the covenant of Abraham, and the church membership of infants, has confirmed and ratified both; as I ſhall now go on to prove; having thus far touched, and I hope, removed, the moſt conſiderable objections to this aſſertion.

Let it then be conſidered, that the covenant of Abraham, containing a charter of privileges for the church, and the right of memberſhip for infant children, being an undoubted privilege granted in this covenant; it muſt be preſumptuous and injurious for any to deny that this covenant ſtands in force, or to pretend, that infants are now cut off from this right and privilege, unleſs they can prove, that God has taken away this covenant, or at leaſt has cancelled that article, which is the foundation of infant church memberſhip. But there is no intimation in the ſcriptures that this covenant is diſannulled, or that infants are cut off from their intereſt in it. The old covenant, which the apoſtle ſays was vaniſhing, was the covenant made with the Iſraelites, when God led them out of Egypt, as has been ſhewn. But of the aboliſhing that covenant which conſtitutes infants, church members, there is nothing to be found in the whole bible. And, till it can be proved to be aboliſhed, it muſt be conſidered and held as valid as ever.

It is further to be obſerved, That this is called an everlaſting Covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. which would be a deciſive proof, that it was not diſannulled, were it not that we find the word, Everlaſting, in ſcripture, ſometimes ſignifying a limited duration. But it muſt at leaſt ſignify, that this covenant was to continue till it was taken away by the ſame divine authority, by which it was at firſt eſtabliſhed. And as we find no ſort of evidence that it has either been vacated or abridged, we conculde that it ſtill abides in full force.

The apoſtles are ſo far from teaching, that Chriſt has diſannulled God's gracious covenant with the fathers, or taken away any of the privileges therein granted to them or their children, that Paul aſſerts to the contrary, in Rom. xv. 8. "Jeſus Chriſt was "a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm "the promiſes made to the fathers." Theſe promiſes are ſummarily contained in the covenant with Abraham, that the Lord would be a God to him and his ſeed; that he ſhould be a father of many nations; and that all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed in him. Theſe promiſes are all confirmed by Chriſt. Abraham is the patriarch of the church. He is conſtituted the father of all them that believe; of all the people of God, of every nation; who are adopted into his family. Even the Gentiles, who were not his natural deſcendants, are received into the number, and entitled to the privileges of his children. He is made the father of more nations, than are derived from his blood. All the nations of the earth derive bleſſings from him, and hold their church privileges under him, as his children and heirs. The covenant with Abraham, has indeed, been accompliſhed, more eminently ſince Chriſt confirmed it, than ever before. His family has been larger, and he has been made a father of more nations than ever. This article of the covenant, which receives the children

children with the parents into the church, is confirmed, as well as the reſt. It would be moſt unreaſonable to think otherwiſe, when the ſcriptures never hint that this article is reſcinded.--- And we have beſides, good evidence, that the chriſtian church has not loſt this privilege, but their children are ſtill children of the covenant, to greater advantage than ever,

The apoſtle tells us again, that "The covenant with Abraham "was confirmed of God in Chriſt, and that the law which was "430 years after, could not diſannul it." Gal. iii. 17. And will any yet inſinuate, that Chriſt has diſannulled this covenant, which God confirmed in him? This would overthrow the apoſtle's argument; who confutes the error of the Judaizing teachers about juſtification, by the ſtability of the Abrahamic covenant: which would be inconcluſive, if that covenant was not in force *.

Indeed, the third chapter to the Galatians, and fourth to the Romans are a proof, that the covenant with Abraham abides in force, under the goſpel diſpenſation, and that Gentile believers, with their children, have an intereſt in it, which can never be evaded. The apoſtle ſays, that "They who are of faith, are "the children of Abraham, and are bleſſed with faithful A-"braham †." And being his adopted children, they are heirs. They inherit the bleſſings of his covenant; and all thoſe privileges of church membership, which were granted to Abraham and his ſeed, belong to believers. And as it was one covenant privilege of the children of Abraham, to have their infant children taken into the covenant and church with them: This privilege is tranſmitted by the covenant, to all who are adopted into the family of Abraham; otherwiſe they are cut off from a part of that inheritance of church privileges which was intailed upon the children of Abraham. The apoſtle adds, "The bleſſ-"ing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles, through Jeſus "Chriſt ¶." Which is, as if he had ſaid, the bleſſings and privileges granted in the covenant with Abraham belong and are conveyed to the Gentile church. The very ſame privileges without any diminution, both for them and their children. "If ye are "Chriſt's,

* It is objected, that "the covenant, of which circumciſion "was appointed for a token, was not 430 years before the giv-"ing of the law; and ſo could not be that covenant, which the "apoſtle ſays was confirmed of God in Chriſt." But, I anſwer, that it was the ſame covenant for ſubſtance, that had been revealed to Abraham many years before circumciſion was inſtituted. And if the apoſtle reckons from an earlier revelation of the ſame covenant, than that in Gen. xvii. it will not affect our argument from theſe words: Since it was one and the ſame covenant that was repeatedly revealed to Abraham at different times, and was confirmed of God in Chriſt.

† Gal. iii. 7, 9. ¶ ver. 14.

" Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to " the promiſe †." Whatever privileges were by the covenant and promiſe of God granted to the children and heirs of Abraham, whether for themſelves and their ſeed, the chriſtian Gentiles are entitled to. For they alſo are declared to be the children and heirs of Abraham. To the ſame purpoſe the apoſtle writes in the fourth chapter to the Romans, quoting thoſe words of the covenant, " I have made thee a father of many nations ¶," as a proof, that Gentile believers are the children of Abraham; and conſequently are comprehended in the covenant and church, together with their offspring.

Again, In Eph. iii. 6. we read, " That the Gentiles are fellow " heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of the promiſe in " Chriſt, by the goſpel." That is, they are fellow heirs with the Jews of the bleſſing and covenant of Abraham, they are admitted to that inheritance of ſpiritual privileges, which God's covenant and promiſe conveyed to his deſcendants; they are of the ſame body the church, which was formed by this covenant; and partakers of the promiſe; that ſame promiſe of the covenant which had been the great privilege of the church all along, and was expreſsly to them and their children *. And this ſeems to point

† Gal. iii. 29. ¶ Rom. iv. 16, 17.

* In vain would our opponents evade theſe proofs by alledging, " That it is only the ſpiritual children of Abraham, that have " an intereſt in the covenant of Abraham, and are heirs of the " privileges therein contained." In anſwer to this, it may ſuffice to give a plain and brief ſtate of the caſe. The covenant with Abraham contains a grant of external church privileges, and alſo of ſaving bleſſings, to his children and heirs, that is the church. The ſpiritual children of Abraham (if we may uſe the term of diſtinction) are the inviſible church, who are in God's account heirs according to the promiſe, to whom the ſpecial grace of the covenant is ſavingly applied. But, as the ſpiritual ſeed are known only to God, and as it is the will of God to have a viſible church, in which his ordinances ſhould be outwardly adminiſtred by men, according to rules by him preſcribed; ſo he has given direction, that all thoſe who are viſibly and in the account of the church children and heirs of Abraham, or church members, ſhould be admitted to the outward ordinances and privileges of God's covenanted people. And God has plainly declared, that all the natural poſterity of Abraham in their generations, were to be received as his heirs, members of the viſible church, and in human acceptation intereſted in that covenant, in which it was promiſed, that he would be a God to him and his ſeed. All theſe, I ſay, were viſibly heirs of Abraham, until diſinherited or cut off from his family by divine direction. And not

point out the true interpretation of that ancient prophecy in Gen. ix. 27. "God ſhall enlarge, or perſuade Japheth, and he "ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan ſhall be his "ſervant." Hereby we are to underſtand, that the Gentiles, who were the poſterity of Japheth, ſhould be taken into the houſe and family of Abraham, deſcended from Shem: that is, they

not only the natural poſterity, but all others, who ſhould deſire to join with them in the faith and worſhip of the true God, were alſo to be reputed and admitted together with their children, as heirs of Abraham by adoption---And accordingly, he became the adoptive father of many nations, beſides his natural deſcendants. Now, as believers are the children and heirs of Abraham, as Paul ſays, and as the bleſſing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles, their natural poſterity muſt ſtand upon the ſame footing exactly with the children of the other heirs, and ſo are to be accounted and admitted as viſible heirs of thoſe privileges which were entailed upon the family of Abraham in their ſucceſſive generations. For the covenant contained an intail of the ſame outward privileges on the children of thoſe heirs: It conveyed the right of heirſhip to them and their ſeed, until they ſhould be diſinherited by divine order.---As therefore the natural poſterity of Abraham were certainly viſibly in covenant, and as ſuch had a right to the ordinances and privileges of the church, though many of them were not, in God's account, the ſpiritual children of Abraham, ſo are alſo the natural poſterity of all believers who are alſo the children and heirs of Abraham: the intail of theſe privileges on the children being an article of the covenant of Abraham, and a part of that bleſſing of his which is come upon the Gentiles---Nor is this bleſſing any otherwiſe reſtricted to the ſpiritual ſeed now than it had been all along. Though in God's account all were not Iſrael that were of Iſrael, yet in the account of the church, and with reſpect to an external right to church privileges, they all ſtood upon a level. Though the ſpecial grace of the covenant is ſecured only to the ſpiritual ſeed, yet the outward privileges of communion with the viſible church belong to all who are viſibly intereſted in the covenant, and ſo in human account the heirs of Abraham, that is, to profeſſed believers, and their children. In fine, as the old covenant was made with the houſe of Iſrael, including the little ones, as the phraſe commonly ſignifies, and as all acknowledge, ſo the new covenant is alſo made with the houſe of Iſrael, Heb. viii. 8, 9, and ſo muſt, in like manner, include the whole family, even the infants of confederate believers.---Salvation comes to their houſe, as Chriſt ſaid to Zaccheus; that is, to their family, according to that promiſe, Jer. xxx. 20. Their children ſhall be as aforetime, that is, children and heirs of the covenant. And accordingly it

is

they ſhould be taken into that ſame church, and enjoy the privileges of that ſame covenant, in which the children of Abraham were born and lived. For to ſuppoſe the meaning to be, as ſome take it, that "God ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem," will make the laſt clauſe of the verſe a needleſs repetition of what had been ſaid juſt before; viz. that Canaan ſhould be the ſervant of Shem; whereas, it is much rather to be underſtood, as foretelling that Canaan ſhould be his ſervant who was to dwell in the tents of Shem, that is Japheth's. However, it matters little how we take this text, as long as we have much clearer and more convictive proofs in the New Teſtament, that Chriſtians with their children are taken into the ſame covenant and church in which Abraham and his ſeed had an intereſt and ſtanding.---Two or three more I will mention, which are, I think, very full to this purpoſe.

In Rom. xi. 16, 17, the Apoſtle ſays, "If the root be holy ſo "are the branches." By the root we are to underſtand the patriarchs, the fathers of the Jews; and the branches are their deſcendants. The patriarchs were holy as being in covenant, and members of the church; and their children the natural branches, are alſo holy in this reſpect. For, they were alſo comprehended in the covenant and church with their parents. It is a federal holineſs, the holineſs of church membership, or a viſible ſeparation and dedication to God, that is here attributed both to the root and branches. They being of the viſible church, were called a holy people; and the outward ordinances and privileges of the church were theirs. Inherent ſanctification is not the holineſs here meant. For that is not derived from parents to children by natural generation. The branches are not therefore the ſubjects of ſaving grace, becauſe the root is ſo. But, if the root, or the parents, are federally holy, as being of the church, and intereſted in the covenant; ſo are the branches, or the children: For theſe alſo are in the covenant, and of the church. This was undoubtedly the caſe in the Old Teſtament church, as all allow. They were born church members. The branches were as much ſo as the root. If the former were holy, the latter were ſo of conſequence; and the token of church membership was put upon them in their infancy. The Apoſtle goes on, "If ſome of the branches "(that is, the unbelieving Jews) were broken off, and thou, (a "Gentile) being a wild olive, wert graffed in among them, and "with

is promiſed in that moſt remarkable prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles into the goſpel church, Iſa. xlix. 22. that God would lift up his hand to the Gentiles, and ſet up his ſtandard to the people, and they ſhould bring the ſons of Zion, or the members of the church, in their arms, &c. as infants are wont to be carried.---A plain intimation that the goſpel church was to receive infants.

" with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree; " boaſt not." Though the branches had the federal holineſs of church members, yet they were liable to be broken off. Thus it befel the greater part of the Jews: They were by their unbelief broken off from the ſtock they before ſtood upon, that is, the church. They loſt their ſtanding therein, and the privileges of members: And the Gentiles were graffed in to the ſame olive, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken. They were taken into that very covenant and church, along with the believing Jews, who were the natural branches, that never were broken off, but maintained their ſtanding. The olive tree of the church, ſpringing from Abraham as its root, or patriarch, and conſtituted by the Abrahamic covenant, was not cut down, and a new one planted. The church, which had ſtood from the early ages of the world, was not diſſolved, and a new one formed upon a foundation and plan entirely different: But the Gentiles were graffed in along with the believing Jews, who were the only living and ſound branches that remained, after the unbelieving Jews were broken off. They became the adopted children of Abraham, were taken into the church, which was ſtill conſidered as his family. The olive tree ſtill ſtood upon the ſame root as before; and the Gentile converts were admitted into the ſame covenant, were laid under its bonds, and veſted with all its privileges, to as great advantage as if they had been the natural branches, or deſcendants from the holy fathers. This is what is meant, by their " partaking of the root and fatneſs of the olive." The unbelieving Jews could not poſſibly be broken off from any church, but that which was formed by the Abrahamic covenant, of which infants were certainly members; for they never belonged to any other. The Gentiles were graffed into the ſame tree, from which the others had been broken. They partook of the ſame root and fatneſs; that is, were endowed with the ſame covenant privileges. Which is a full proof, that the covenant with Abraham is not aboliſhed, but remains in force, and that the church conſtituted by it, of which infants were undoubted members, was not diſſolved; but that the Chriſtian Gentiles are taken into it, along with the believing Jews, who ſtill remained in it; and the children of the believing Gentiles ſtill had the ſame right and privilege of church membership which Abraham's poſterity had all along. And this is agreeable to the warning which Chriſt gave the Jews. Matth. xxi. 43. " The kingdom " of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation that " ſhall bring forth the fruits thereof." The ſame kingdom of God, or church privileges, which were taken from the Jews, were given undiminiſhed, to the Gentiles. To this we may add thoſe words, Matth. viii. 11. " Many ſhall come from the eaſt and the " weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the " kingdom of God." That is, the Gentiles ſhall be taken into the

the family of Abraham; into the ſame covenant and church privileges with them, (ſo the words are expounded by ſome good interpreters) "but the children of the kingdom, (the unbelieving Jews) ſhall be caſt out (of the church) into outer darkneſs;" they ſhall be abandoned and given up to ignorance, blindneſs, and infidelity, like the heathen, who are without; as well as puniſhed by terrible plagues in this world, and by the fire of God's wrath, which ſhall burn to the loweſt hell; under which they ſhall weep, and wail, and gnaſh their teeth for rage and anguiſh.

The exceptions of the Antepedobaptiſts to this argument are of no weight. They deny that the Gentile converts were taken into the Jewiſh church, which, they ſay, was aboliſhed and taken away. 'Tis true, the national church ſtate, formed by the covenant of Horeb, was taken away, as well as the political government of the Jews. But the church of God, formed by the covenant with Abraham, had ſubſiſted long before. Nor was this covenant diſannulled by that of Horeb, as the apoſtle teaches. The Gentiles were graffed into that olive, or church, from which the Jews were broken off: and that muſt be the Jewiſh church as conſtituted by the Abrahamic covenant. Though the Moſaic hierarchy was falling, the church ſtood firm under that ſame covenant by which it had been formed long before that hierarchy was erected. This is that covenant on which the church membership of infants is founded; out of which the unbelieving Jews were caſt; and into which the Gentiles were taken.

Some have pretended that "Chriſt is the holy root, and "Chriſtians are the branches, which the apoſtle here means." But this is manifeſtly abſurd. For then we muſt ſay, that ſome of Chriſt's branches are broken off; that is, the infidel Jews, who never were in Chriſt, no not ſo much as by an outward profeſſion of faith in him.

But the more common pretence is, "That the goſpel church, "conſtituted at firſt of believing Jews, is the olive, into which the "Gentile converts were graffed." But how could the unbelieving Jews be broken off from the Chriſtian church, when they never were in or of it? To this it is only ſaid, that the unbelieving Jews were left out of the church. What! Is that a breaking off? A ſtrange fancy! A new, unheard of way of breaking off what never was on. Is the Chriſtian church their own olive tree, and are they the natural branches who never were branches of it at all; never were in it?

It is indeed a matter of patience, to ſee how heroically men who are devoted to their ſchemes, will kick againſt the pricks, and affirm and deny almoſt any thing, rather than give them up. The plaineſt and moſt pointed ſcripture teſtimonies that ſtand directly in oppoſition to them, avail nothing. New ſenſes, never heard of before, muſt be forced on common words. Holineſs muſt mean legitimacy; breaking off muſt ſignify leaving out what

what was never in; rather than infants be allowed any place in the church. In this way of managing a debate, people never need fear being convinced. They are out of the reach of argument.

But, let us once more hear what the ſcripture ſays.--When thoſe, who were pricked in their hearts, on the day of Pentecoſt, ſaid to Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do? Peter ſaid unto them, "Repent and be baptized "every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion "of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For "the promiſe is to you, and to your children, and to all that are "afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call." Acts ii. 38,39. That it was the covenant with Abraham, that is here called the promiſe, will appear from the following conſiderations.---1. This covenant is commonly in the New Teſtament called the Promiſe, by way of diſtinction and eminency. See Rom. iv. 13, 14. "For the Promiſe, that he ſhould be heir of the world, was not "to Abraham or to his ſeed, through the law, but through the "righteouſneſs of faith. For, if they which are of the law be "heirs, faith is made vain, and the Promiſe of none effect. There-"fore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that "the Promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, not to that "only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith "of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Gal. iii. 17. and on, "The covenant which was before confirmed of God in Chriſt, "the law which was 430 years after cannot diſannul, that it "ſhould make the Promiſe of none effect. For if the inheritance "be of the law, it is no more of promiſe, but God gave it to "Abraham by Promiſe. If ye are Chriſt's, then are ye Abra-"ham's ſeed, and heirs according to the Promiſe." Once more. Gal. iv. 28. "We, as Iſaac, are children of the Promiſe."

In all theſe places, and in divers others, the covenant with Abraham is called the Promiſe; which ſhews that it was commonly ſo ſtiled. 2. If we compare this text with Acts iii. 25. we ſhall find the promiſe there explained, to mean the covenant with Abraham. For the apoſtle, there addreſſing the Jews, to perſuade them to repent and be converted, in like manner as he had done on the day of Pentecoſt, propoſes the very ſame encouragement to them in theſe words: "Ye are the children of "the covenant which God made with our fathers, Saying unto "Abraham, and in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be "bleſſed." His telling them that "they were the children of "Abraham's covenant," is to the ſame purpoſe exactly, as if he had told them, that the Promiſe was to them and their children. For this covenant was undoubtedly to the parents and their infant children. And their being declared children of the covenant, ſignified that they were heirs to the privileges of the covenant. So that theſe texts are exactly parallel, and explain each other.

The ſame apoſtle, preaching to the ſame ſort of hearers, (that is the Jews) propoſes the ſame argument in different words, even their intereſt in the promiſe, or covenant with Abraham, in order to enforce the ſame exhortation, viz. Repentance and converſion for the remiſſion of ſins. So that we cannot reaſonably doubt, whether the promiſe here ſpoken of, be not the covenant with Abraham, if we will allow the apoſtle to explain his own words. 3. What the apoſtle here ſays of the promiſe, agrees exactly in every particular, with the Abrahamic covenant, which had all along included the poſterity of Abraham and their infant children, together with the Gentiles that were afar off, even as many of them, as the Lord did from time to time call into his church, and who, in obedience to this call, became proſelytes, or Comers, as the word properly ſignifies.---All, who upon the divine call, Came from afar to join themſelves to the Lord, and his people, were received, together with their children, into the church and covenant by circumciſion; and the promiſe was to them and their children alſo, as has been obſerved. The covenant of Abraham, did belong to all thoſe, who were in, and of the church. Peter's hearers, with their children, being actual members in the church, did not need a new call into the church, in order to their being the children of the covenant and promiſe. But, with the Gentiles who were afar off, and out of the church, the caſe was otherwiſe. They muſt firſt be called in, and become proſelytes, before the promiſe would be to them and theirs. But ſo many as were thus called, and admitted into the family of Abraham, had an intereſt in the covenant and promiſe, as well as the Jews. Thus the caſe had ſtood all along according to the Abrahamic covenant; and thus the caſe ſtood upon the day of Pentecoſt, as Peter ſays. Which ſhews that it was this covenant that Peter had in his eye, when he ſaid, "The promiſe is to you and your children:" That his words are therefore to be explained according to the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant: That this covenant, which is the foundation of infant church memberſhip, was not then aboliſhed; but ſtood in force: And I preſume no one will ſay it has been aboliſhed ſince.

In this manner Peter's hearers muſt have underſtood his words. They had been born and bred in that church and covenant, which included both parents and children. They knew that infants had always been acknowledged as church members, ever ſince a church had been formed in the world. The idea of a church which ſhould not admit the children with the parents, would have been as new and ſtrange to them, as a church that would not admit females, would be to us. A promiſe, or covenant conveying, privileges to them and their children, would be naturally underſtood by them in the ſame manner as thoſe promiſes in the Old Teſtament, which ſo often occur in the ſame form of expreſſion, had conſtantly been taken; and particularly

the

the promiſe to Abraham, which was the moſt eminent and fundamental. They would as naturally conclude that their young children are immediately reſpected, as we ſhould conclude ours to be in an inſtrument, conveying privileges to us and our heirs; and they would have no doubt, that a grant of privileges was here aſſerted to the children of thoſe who were in the covenant and church, more than to the children of heathens. Now as the words of the apoſtle would carry this meaning moſt naturally and obviouſly to the underſtanding of his hearers, and as the ſame form of expreſſion elſewhere is conſtantly to be thus underſtood, and no reaſon appears why it may not be taken here in the ſame ſenſe; this muſt in all reaſon be received as the true interpretation. And if this promiſe belonged to the infant children of the inchurched and covenanted Jews, at the day of Pentecoſt, none will deny that it ſtill belongs to the children of the Gentiles, who were afar off; even as many as it pleaſes the Lord to call into his goſpel church.

This promiſe Peter holds up to the Jews, as a warrant or reaſon why they ſhould be baptized in the name of Chriſt. Repent and be baptized; For the promiſe is to you, &c. Now if their intereſt in the promiſe was a good reaſon why they ſhould be baptized, as the apoſtle aſſerts; then their childrens having an intereſt in the promiſe with them (as is alſo aſſerted) is as good a reaſon for their being baptized; even as an intereſt in the covenant was a reaſon for circumciſion to Abraham and his children.

This text is then a ſubſtantial proof that the covenant of Abraham ſtood in force, after the goſpel diſpenſation took place: Since this appears to be that very promiſe which Peter addreſſes to his hearers. And we ſee that that particular clauſe, which contains a grant of the privilege of church membership to the children of God's people was not taken out, when "Chriſt the miniſter of the "circumciſion confirmed by his death the promiſes made to the "fathers." We then, and all others, whom God ſhall call into his church, together with our children, as the adopted children and heirs of Abraham, have an intereſt in this promiſe; are members of the goſpel church; and the proper ſubjects of chriſtian baptiſm.

The evaſions of this proof of infants church membership and intereſt in the covenant, which our opponents have invented, are unnatural, improbable and abſurd. They would perſuade us, "That the Promiſe here ſpoken of was not the covenant with "Abraham, but the promiſe of the pouring out of the ſpirit in "Joel." But how can this be, when the apoſtle ſays that the prophecy of Joel foretold thoſe miraculous gifts of the ſpirit, ſpeaking with tongues, and propheſying, which appeared on the day of Pentecoſt? Are theſe gifts promiſed to, and conferred upon all, whom the Lord ſhall call? Beſides, I have proved, that the promiſe here mentioned, was the covenant with Abraham;

and till the reaſons adduced are ſhewn to be without weight, it is folly to ſet up an unproved aſſertion in oppoſition to them. But whatever the promiſe may be ſuppoſed to be, it belonged to Peter's hearers, and their children, as he ſays; and he holds it up to them as a reaſon for their being baptized. It muſt therefore be a reaſon for the baptiſm of their children alſo. If the gift of the Holy Ghoſt was promiſed to them, it was to their children. And they were to be conſidered as ſubjects of baptiſm on account of the promiſe; not becauſe the gifts of the ſpirit were manifeſt in them, but in order to their receiving the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. For it is to be obſerved, that the gift of the Holy Ghoſt is propoſed as the conſequence, and not the pre-requiſite of baptiſm. "Be baptized, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy "Ghoſt."

But to give this plea the greateſt advantage, let us ſuppoſe that the pouring out of the ſpirit in his ordinary ſanctifying influences is the matter of that promiſe in Joel; though Peter explains it otherwiſe: And that this is the promiſe, which he, in this text propoſes to his hearers, as reſpecting them and their children, though we have ſeen him explain himſelf otherwiſe.---Our argument from theſe words, would yet ſtand good. For the promiſe of the ſanctifying ſpirit being included in the bleſſing of Abraham, as the apoſtle plainly teaches us, in Gal. iii. 14. and it being ſeveral times particularly promiſed to the ſeed of God's covenanted people, (The Lord will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed. I will pour my ſpirit on thy ſeed, &c.) We may hence infer, that they to whom this promiſe belongs, are intereſted in the covenant and bleſſing of Abraham, and may properly be recognized as of the church and people of God.

And in the faith and hope of the accompliſhment of this promiſe, God's covenanted people ſhould dedicate their infant ſeed to him, and have the token of his gracious covenant put upon them.

It is further ſaid, "That the children to whom the promiſe "belongs, are not infants, but adults---the poſterity of the Jews." But though adults are the children of their parents, yet infants too are doubtleſs children. What warrant then have any to deny that they have an intereſt in that promiſe, which is to the children indefinitely, without any exception of infants?

But the evaſion which is moſt inſiſted on, is, "That the pro-"miſe is reſtrained to thoſe only, whom the Lord ſhall call: "and infants give no evidence of their being called." But this will not bear examination. I have already ſhewn, that this promiſe was the covenant with Abraham, and is therefore to be explained according to the tenor of that covenant, which included him and his children, and ſo many of the Gentiles as God ſhould from time to time call into his church. The calling of Abraham was a ſufficient call to all his poſterity, to give them a viſible intereſt

tereſt in the covenant, and ſtanding in the church, till they forfeited and were cut off from this privilege. The reſtraining clauſe, therefore, only reſpected thoſe who were not yet called into the church of God, and not thoſe Jews and their children who were then actual members and children of the covenant. Repentance and baptiſm, in the name of Chriſt, were required to prevent their being cut off from the covenant, and family of Abraham; but the promiſe was then to them and their children. There is a plain reaſon why the promiſe ſhould reſpect only ſo many of thoſe, who are without, as the Lord ſhould call. But how abſurdly would the apoſtle ſpeak, according to the interpretation which the Antepedobaptiſts put upon his words. "The promiſe "is to you and your children. But neither you, nor your chil- "dren appear at preſent, to have any intereſt in it; and no one "knows, that they ever will have. You are not to imagine that "either you or your children are entitled to any privilege by it, "more than belongs to every man and child in the world. All "that I mean is, that the promiſe will belong to thoſe who ſhall "be called. If this ſhould prove to be the caſe with any of you, "or of your children, or any other perſon, then, and not till "then, the promiſe will be to you and them." If this be all that is intended, it had been much more plainly expreſſed by only ſaying, "The promiſe will be to thoſe, whom the Lord ſhall call." To what purpoſe is all this flouriſh of words, without meaning? What end can this particular mention of them, and their children, as intereſted in the promiſe, ſerve, unleſs to perſuade them, that ſome ſpecial privilege belonged to them, while there was nothing at all in it? It is either inſignificant, or fallacious; and would convey to the underſtanding of the hearers either no meaning, or a falſe one*.

Suppoſe

* Dr. Gill has given a moſt improbable and ſtrange account, why Peter declares the promiſe to appertain to their children, Says he, "Whereas they had imprecated Chriſt's blood, not only "upon themſelves but their poſterity, for which they were under "great concern; they are told this promiſe of ſalvation by "Chriſt reached to them alſo, provided they repented and were "baptized; which is the reaſon that mention is made of their "children." Reply to Clark. But how does it appear, that theſe Jews were pricked in their hearts with great concern for their poſterity. When addreſſing themſelves to the apoſtles for advice, they ſay not one word about their children: Could they think there was no pardoning mercy for their children, upon their repentance, after the apoſtle had told them, that "whoſo- "ever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved?" After pardon had been offered to thoſe, who had been perſonally concerned in the murder of Chriſt, no ſcruple could remain con-

Suppoſe it were declared, that all the privileges contained in our frame of government belonged to the native ſubjects and their children, and alſo to foreigners, even as many as the government ſhould naturalize; and ſome one pretending to give the ſenſe of this declaration ſhould contend, that according to it, neither the native ſubjects, nor their children, had a right to any of theſe privileges, unleſs they ſhould be firſt naturalized by an act of the government; would he not be thought ridiculouſly abſurd? The adverſaries of infant church membership, are equally abſurd and unreaſonable, in their way of explaining the apoſtle's words.

The argument from this text we have ſo long been conſidering, cannot be evaded. And we may further add, that ſince it is on all hands allowed to have been a great privilege of the Jewiſh infants, that they were in the covenant and church of God; if the infants of chriſtians are left out of the church, as our opponents teach, then the goſpel church is deprived of an important privilege, which the Jewiſh church enjoyed: And its conſtitution is leſs favourable to infants. Formerly, they were children of the covenant, and the people of God; and as ſuch had many great and precious promiſes made to them, for the comfort and encouragement of their parents and them. But now, if we will hearken to ſome men, they are all to be ranked with the children of thoſe, who are ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, who are without hope, and without God in the world: And the uncovenanted mercy of God is the only ground of hope that remains for them. If it were a privilege to the Jewiſh infants to be members of the church of God, no good reaſon can be given, why a right of membership in the church ſhould not ſtill be as great a privilege to the infants of chriſtians. But can we believe, that the goſpel diſpenſation has diminiſhed the privileges of the church in any inſtance; or that it has put any claſs of mankind, whether infants or adults, in a more diſadvantageous ſtate than before; depriving them, without any fault of theirs, of their ſtanding in the church of God, which is acknowledged to have been an important privilege? This ought not to be ſuppoſed, unleſs clear and poſitive proof of it could be produced. But no ſuch proof has been or can be found. Wherefore, to bring this argument to a point: The privilege of church membership has certainly been granted to the infant children of God's profeſſing people; which grant ſtands in force till it be revoked. Our opponents have often been called upon to produce an authentic act of revocation, and the demand is reaſonable. This they cannot do. On the contrary,

cerning their poſterity, whether there was hope of pardon for them upon their repentance. Nor had the apoſtle any occaſion to mention their children as intereſted in the promiſe, to eaſe their minds of ſuch a ſcruple.

contrary, we demonſtrate, that this grant has not been revoked, but is renewed, confirmed, and ratified in the goſpel.

As a proper appendix to what has thus far been diſcourſed of the intereſt of infants in the church covenant, I ſhall juſt mention that common argument from baptiſm ſucceeding in the room of circumciſion; but ſhall not enlarge upon it. As infants were the ſubjects of circumciſion, and were recognized and marked as the people of God by this rite, the concluſion is very natural and reaſonable, that if baptiſm comes in the place of circumciſion, as the token of admiſſion into the church, infants are the proper ſubjects of this ordinance; unleſs God has declared to the contrary; which can never be made to appear. It is indeed denied by our opponents, that baptiſm does come in the place of circumciſion. But I cannot find that they have explained themſelves diſtinctly, how far, and in what reſpect, they mean to deny it. I own that baptiſm does not anſwer all the ſame purpoſes under the goſpel diſpenſation, that circumciſion did under the Moſaic. It does not introduce the ſubjects into a national church, and wordly ſanctuary. It has not a typical reſpect to the Saviour to come. It is not a yoke of bondage, obliging to the obſervance of the carnal ordinances of the law of Moſes. And our opponents, if they will be ingenuous and reaſonable, muſt allow that baptiſm does, in many reſpects, come in the place of circumciſion. It anſwers ſimilar ends in the goſpel church; and is of the ſame general ſignification; and is to be applied to the ſame ſubjects, that is, church members; and has even the ſame name given to it; and upon the inſtitution of baptiſm, as an ordinance of ſtanding and univerſal obligation, circumciſion was no longer the token of admiſſion into the viſible church, as it had been before. And this is all we mean, when we aſſert, that baptiſm ſucceeds to circumciſion.

As circumciſion was the outward token of the covenant, and of admiſſion into the church; ſo baptiſm is the token of church membership, and of an intereſt in the new covenant; which I have proved, is ſubſtantially the ſame with that of Abraham, to which circumciſion was annexed. They are both the appointed ſign and badge of the people of God. As circumciſion was a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith to Abraham, ſo is baptiſm to chriſtians.

Again, circumciſion and baptiſm though different in external rites are alike in their ſpiritual ſignification. They both pointed out our native corruption, and need of purification, by an inward and ſpiritual renovation. They both ſignified cleanſing from the guilt and defilement of ſin by the blood of Chriſt, an admiſſion into the church---a dedication to God, an obligation to walk in his commandments and ordinances, and a right to covenant privileges.

It is further to be obſerved, that baptiſm in the New Teſtament bears the name of the circumciſion of Chriſt, or the chriſtian circumciſion. Col. ii. 11, 12. And the apoſtle calls chriſtians the Circumciſion, under the goſpel; which was the common appellation of thoſe, who had under the former diſpenſation, received the token of induction into the church. A ſufficient intimation that the one takes the place of the other.

Accordingly, circumciſion ceaſed to be longer the token of church membership, after Chriſt ſent out his apoſtles to preach and baptize in his name, when baptiſm was made the ſtanding rite of admiſſion into the goſpel church.

For theſe reaſons, we cannot but conſider baptiſm as taking that place in the goſpel œconomy, in which circumciſion ſtood under the old diſpenſation; though we readily allow that each of theſe ordinances had ſome peculiar ends and ſignifications, ſuited to the different ſtates of the church, in which they were reſpectively in force; in reſpect of which peculiarities they may not properly be parallel. And hence we argue, that ſince circumciſion and baptiſm are manifeſtly ſimilar in their main ends, uſes and ſignificancies; infants are as proper ſubjects of baptiſm, as they were of circumciſion; and that the divine order for adminiſtring the one ordinance to them, warrants our adminiſtring that other ordinance that comes in its room. And the argument is not only popular, but of real weight; though I do not lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon it.

But it is objected, "That the ſcriptures do not ſay, that bap-"tiſm comes in the room of circumciſion." I anſwer, Paul's terming baptiſm the circumciſion of Chriſt, is a plain intimation to this purpoſe. And the reaſons I have adduced, which are grounded on the ſcripture, are a ſufficient evidence of the truth of the aſſertion, as it has been explained.

It is further objected, "That the outward rites are very un-"like." But I can ſee no weight in this. The different ſtates of the church under the Old and New Teſtament might require this difference of outward adminiſtration reſpecting the initiating rite.

It is further objected, "That the ſubjects of baptiſm and cir-"cumciſion were different. Circumciſion was to be adminiſtred "only to males, baptiſm to both ſexes." I anſwer. The circumciſion of the males was the appointed token of church membership to the people of God of both ſexes. The females were accounted of the circumciſion; and were admitted to the holy ordinances which were interdicted to the uncircumciſed and unclean.

It is objected again, "That baptiſm was in uſe and force before "circumciſion was aboliſhed." I anſwer. Though baptiſm was adminiſtred by John, and the diſciples of Chriſt, a ſhort time before circumciſion was aboliſhed, yet this no more proves that the former ſucceeds not in the room of the latter, than Solo-

mon's

mon's reigning with his father a short time, is a proof that he did not succeed and reign in his stead. But though baptism was in use before, it was not fully established as the rite of induction into the church, till the mission of the apostles; after which, circumcision was no longer required for that purpose, as it had been before; though for other reasons it continued in use among the believing Jews some years longer.

It is further inquired, "What need there was that those who "had been circumcised should be baptized, if they are both ordi- "nances of the same use and significancy." I answer, It was the will of Christ, that all his disciples should receive the new token and badge of church membership, although they had been admitted members of the Old Testament church. And such as would not recognize themselves as his disciples, were to be rejected, and unchurched, and be as branches broken off by their unbelief. Their circumcision became uncircumcision, and the token of their being the people of God became null and void.

But these things I pass over briefly. For, though I think they are well worthy of consideration, yet they may not be of so much importance in the main argument, as many have been apt to suppose----But after all, some may think the doctrine we plead for will involve us in an unsurmountable difficulty. For, it may be said, "the new covenant contains a grant, not only of external "privileges, but of all spiritual and saving blessings; and so must "secure eternal Salvation to all that have an interest in it. But "can we think that all the seed of visible or real believers will be "finally saved? And to say that the covenant grant is condition- "al, if they perform the duties required on their part, will not "help the matter. For if such a conditional grant be all, this is "not peculiar to the seed of believers, but the same conditional "promise is made to all mankind. And besides, it is to be re- "membred that whatever conditions may be supposed in the "new covenant grant, there is an effectual provision made in the "promise of all that grace that is needful to work in us to will "and to do whatever is required of us in order to salvation. So "that still the salvation of those who are interested in the cove- "nant, seems to be as sure and stable as the covenant itself."

In answer to this objection, I would say, that the new covenant does indeed contain a grant of all saving blessings to believers and their seed, but with this difference: All true believers have a firm promise of all saving blessings for themselves, whereby eternal salvation is secured to them. The same blessings are indefinitely promised to their children. That is, though it be not promised that all the children of believers shall have that grace conferred on them, which shall issue in their eternal salvation, yet it is an article of the new covenant, that "God will pour "out his spirit on the seed of his covenanted people, and his "blessing on their offspring; by means of which, they shall "spring

" ſpring up as the graſs: And that he will circumciſe the heart " of their ſeed to fear and love the Lord." Many other promiſes there are to the ſame purpoſe; which may ſerve as a foundation of a ſure hope to them, that ſome, yea many of their children, ſhall ſhare with them in all the bleſſings of the new covenant. Theſe promiſes are made Eſpecially and in a diſtinguiſhing manner to the children of God's people; and they will have their full accompliſhment in the ſalvation of many of them. If it had only been promiſed, that God would pour out his ſpirit upon ſome of the children of men, this would give no peculiar ground of hope, to a believer, reſpecting the ſalvation of his children. For thoſe who are in and out of the church, are alike children of men. But the promiſe, being to them and their children, brings the bleſſings of ſalvation home to their houſe. God may extend his uncovenanted mercy to the heathen, and the families that call not on his name. But he has not engaged himſelf by a covenant promiſe to do this for them, as he has to vouchſafe this bleſſing to the children of his own people. Accordingly, the apoſtle tells the jailor, that if he believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he ſhould be ſaved, and his houſe; which implies, that ſome at leaſt, if not all his family, ſhould ſhare with him in this bleſſing.

And ſurely it ought to be accounted a great thing, to have the bleſſings of the covenant indefinitely promiſed to our children, and have them pointed out as thoſe for whom, in particular, God deſigns his ſpecial favour. And accordingly the ſucceſſion of the church has ordinarily been continued in the families of God's people. " They are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and " their children after them." They have peculiar encouragement to pray for their children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in hopes that a ſpecial bleſſing will follow their endeavours. And ſuch children have ſpecial encouragement to ſeek the God of their fathers, " who hath " not ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye me in vain."

Now, ſuch is the effect of this gracious promiſe to the children of the covenant, that according to the ordinance and appointment of God, all ſuch children are, in the account of the church, members of Chriſt's myſtical body, and heirs of ſalvation; and particularly are to be admitted into the church by baptiſm, in like manner as adults are upon a profeſſion of faith. And though the grace of the new covenant promiſed to the children of believers indefinitely, may not be ſavingly applied to all of them, yet it is certain that ſome, yea many (no one knows how many) ſhall be made the ſubjects of it. And as all of them have viſibly an equal intereſt in the covenant, it is the will of God that they all ſhould, without diſtinction, enjoy the ſame privilege of church membership; and that their being children of the covenant ſhould be taken as a ſufficient recommendation of them to the communion of

the

the church, and be accounted as valid and satisfactory an evidence of their being the people of God, as a profession of faith is on behalf of an adult. And if such children should die in infancy, their interest in the covenant is a good ground on which we believe they will be eternally saved. And while they live, they are, according to the gospel rule, the subjects of church privileges and ordinances, as far and as soon as they are capable of, and actually meet for them.

To these scriptural arguments in favour of infant church membership I shall add another consideration, which seems to me to have great weight.

The Jews certainly knew that their infants had an interest in the covenant of Abraham, and had always been acknowledged, received, and recognized by circumcision, as being of the church and people of God. If the apostles had taught that infants were no longer to have an interest in God's covenant, or be members of the church, or receive any token of their being the people of God; the doctrine must have been new, strange, very shocking, and offensive to the Jews. They must certainly have taken notice of it, and been greatly displeased at it. They opposed the apostles with all their might, and did all in their power to render them odious, and set the people against them and their new doctrine. They were ready to take offence, and wanted neither wit nor will to lay hold of and exaggerate a plausible and popular objection. Such an objection they would have had, if the apostles had denied that their children were to be church members any longer. They would not have borne such a doctrine, which declared all their children excommunicated and cut off from the kingdom and people of the Lord, and to have no part in him; but would certainly have urged the objection with a vehemence. And the apostles must have seen, that it highly concerned them to answer the objection, and take up so dangerous a stumbling block, if their doctrine had given so obvious and fair a handle to their enemies against them. But we have no hint in the New Testament, or any author, Jewish, Christian, or Heathen, that ever I could find or learn, that the Jews ever made any such objection to the apostles, or their doctrine; or that the apostles ever attempted either to obviate or silence it, or said one word about it: which is certainly a most violent presumption, and may almost pass for plenary evidence, that the apostles did not, by denying the church membership of infants, furnish an obvious occasion and ground for any such objection.

I shall mention but one argument more, grounded upon the History of Infant Baptism, and the practice of the church from the apostolic age, according to the testimony of the earliest writers. The fact, in short is found to stand thus: 1. That the validity and lawfulness of infant baptism appears not to have ever been denied by any christians till about the year 1130; and then only by

by one Peter de Bruis in France, with his followers, a ſmall ſect, which held withal, that no infants were ſaved, and divers other groſs errors, as hiſtorians report. It ſoon dwindled to nothing. After which, there cannot be found a ſingle inſtance, well vouched, of a perſon oppoſing infant baptiſm (except ſuch as denied water baptiſm) till the Anabaptiſts ſprang up in Germany about 250 years ago. To this purpoſe we have the teſtimony of Doctor Wall, a learned, diligent and faithful writer on the ſubject, in his Hiſtory of Infant Baptiſm. Theſe are his words "For the "firſt 400 years there appears only one man, Tertullian, that "adviſed the delay of infant baptiſm in ſome caſes, and one Gre"gory that did perhaps practiſe ſuch delay in the caſe of his chil"dren; but no ſociety ſo thinking, or ſo practiſing; nor no one "man ſaying that it was unlawful to baptize infants. In the "next 700 years, there is not ſo much as one man to be found, "that either ſpoke for, or practiſed ſuch delay, but all the con"trary. And when about the year 1130, one ſect among the "Waldenſes declared againſt the baptizing of infants, as being "incapable of ſalvation, the main body of that people rejected "their opinion: and they of them that held that opinion, quick"ly dwindled away and diſappeared; there being no more heard "of holding that tenet, till the riſing of the German Antepedobap"tiſts, in the year 1522." Thus far Dr. Wall. To this our opponents have hitherto found nothing to oppoſe, worthy of credit, except ſome teſtimonies to the practice of baptizing adults; which are nothing to the purpoſe; ſince no one doubts that unbaptized adults, as well as infants, are the ſubjects of baptiſm. Or if any have been found ſpeaking againſt the baptiſm of infants, they have appeared to be ſuch as were againſt all water baptiſm.

2. On the other hand, we have the expreſs teſtimony of the learned Chriſtian writers, who lived within one, two, and three hundred years of the apoſtles, that infant baptiſm was not only then commonly practiſed in the church, but had been received and practiſed from the apoſtles; and that none were known of, among all the numerous ſects of Chriſtians, pretending to deny it.

The teſtimonies of the fathers to this purpoſe, are commonly known by thoſe who are moderately verſed in this controverſy. Juſtin Martyr, who wrote about 40 years after the apoſtles, mentions expreſsly ſome aged Chriſtians, who were made diſciples in, or from their infancy. And though he mentions not their infant baptiſm, his words fairly imply it. For if they were made diſciples in infancy, they were doubtleſs the ſubjects of baptiſm. Irenæus, who is ſaid to have been born in the apoſtolic age, mentions the baptiſm of infants. He calls it, indeed, their regeneration;---but ſo baptiſm was commonly termed by the ancient fathers, as all who are verſed in their writings know and acknowledge. Tertullian who lived within 100 years of the apoſtles, ſpeaks of the baptizing of infants as a practice of the church; but adviſes to the delay

delay of it, except in caſes of neceſſity; though he has nothing to ſay againſt the validity and lawfulneſs of it. He adviſes alſo the delay of baptiſm to adults, till they were married, or confirmed in continency. Though he was ſingular and whimſical in his opinion, yet he may well be admitted as a credible witneſs that infant baptiſm was a common practice in the church at that time. And this is all the uſe we mean to make of any of the teſtimonies we ſhall produce.

Origen, who alſo lived within 100 years of the apoſtles, and who was one of the moſt learned and knowing men of the age, declares, that infants are, by the uſage of the church, baptized for the forgiveneſs of ſin. And that an order for the baptizing infants, had been delivered to the church, from the apoſtles, who knew that the pollution of ſin is in all *.

Cyprian, who lived but little more than 100 years after the apoſtles, gives as full a teſtimony as poſſible to the practice of infant baptiſm at the time he lived. At a council of 66 miniſters, held about 150 years after the apoſtles, it was debated, whether it would not be proper to delay the baptizing of infants, till the eighth day, according to the law of circumciſion. [Note, it appears they conſidered baptiſm as coming in the room of circumciſion.] They were unanimouſly of opinion, that there was no reaſon for any ſuch delay.

Paſſing over divers other teſtimonies as expreſs as can be deſired, I ſhall only add that of Auguſtine, about 300 years after the Apoſtles;

* A late writer, in defence of infant baptiſm, quoting this teſtimony of Origen, aſcribes it, by miſtake, to Irenæus. Dr. Gill, obſerving the miſtake, bluſters at a ſtrange rate; charges the writer with forgery; ſays there is no ſuch paſſage in Irenæus; defies the whole literary world to produce or point out any ſuch paſſage in him, and exclaims, "What a wretched cauſe muſt infant "baptiſm be, to require ſuch management as this!" Which declaration of the Doctor has been quoted by a pamphlet writer among ourſelves (Mr. H. S.) to diſcredit the accounts given of the antiquity of infant baptiſm. It ſeems, therefore fit, that this matter be ſet in a true light, for the ſatisfaction of ſuch as may need information.

It is true, this writer was miſtaken in aſcribing this paſſage to Irenæus; and the Doctor had a right to correct this ſlip of his memory. It was not Irenæus, but it was Origen, who lived within 100 years of the apoſtles, that ſays "The church received a tra- "dition or order from the apoſtles to adminiſter baptiſm to in- "fants." This the Doctor knew: and his breaking out in ſuch a pedantic, abuſive, villifying ſtrain, upon occaſion of a miſtake of ſo little importance, and the ſcurrilous inſult he offers, not only to the writer, but to the cauſe itſelf of infant baptiſm, muſt ſtand as an ignominious ſample and monument of diſingenuity, inſolence and folly.

apoſtles ; who declares that infant baptiſm had been every where conſtantly practiſed in the church, ever ſince the apoſtles. And diſputing againſt Pelagius and his followers, who denied original ſin, he urges the baptiſm of infants as an argument, that they were ſubject to the guilt and defilement of it. And his antagoniſts, though hard preſſed with the argument, are ſo far from calling the right of infant baptiſm in queſtion, that they acknowledge that they knew not, nor ever heard, that it was denied by any. A remarkable teſtimony, as coming from perſons of eminent learning and abilities, who had travelled over a great part of Chriſtendom, and ſo had the beſt opportunity of getting the moſt certain information, and would at once have got rid of a moſt troubleſome objection againſt their tenet, if they could have invalidated the authority of infant baptiſm.

Upon the whole, that infant baptiſm has been received and practiſed in the ancient church ever ſince the apoſtles is atteſted by all antiquity, and denied by no one ancient writer. The fathers could not be ignorant what the practice of the church was in a caſe ſo notorious as this muſt have been. If their truth may be relied upon, it is an undeniable fact, that infant baptiſm has obtained ever ſince the apoſtles, and was delivered by them to the church.--The great Calvin, therefore declares roundly, " that they who ſcatter it abroad among the ſimple vulgar, that " infant baptiſm was for many years unknown in the church, " lie moſt foully : (fædiſſime mentiuntur) ſince the moſt ancient " writers refer its original to the times of the apoſtles*."

The exceptions of the contrary party have often been obviated. 1. " They object the fewneſs of the teſtimonies" in favor of infant baptiſm in the early ages of the church : which is nothing ſtrange if their was a univerſal agreement in ſentiment and practice in this matter, as appears to have been the caſe ; and when it is conſidered, that but few of the writings of the ancient fathers are come down to us, and that ſuch of them as we have are upon ſuch ſubjects, as did not lead them to ſay much of it. But if they ſpeak but ſparingly for infant baptiſm, they ſay nothing againſt it, except Tertullian ; who yet objects not to the lawfulneſs or validity of it, and even allows its expediency in ſome caſes. 2. They ſurmiſe, that ſome of the teſtimonies are not genuine ; the credit of which have been ſufficiently vindicated. Beſides this, they have little or nothing to alledge, except arbitrary gueſſes, and ſuppoſals, not worth repeating.

Now, as the practice of the church was doubtleſs uniform at firſt in this point, and continued ſo as long as the apoſtles lived ; if infants were not baptized during the apoſtolic age (which continued about 60 years after our Saviour's aſcenſion) it is incredible that the church ſhould ſo ſoon, and ſo univerſally depart from the rule and order, which had been delivered to, and univerſally

* " Inſt. lib. 4 Cap. 16 Sect. 8.

verſally received by them. But if any ſuch ſtriking and notorious innovation as our opponents ſuppoſe to have taken place, had been moved for; it is ſurely beyond all belief, that it ſhould be agreed to every where, and not one individual proteſt againſt it for more than 1100 years; in which time, there were ſo many oppoſite parties and factions among profeſſed chriſtians, who were endeavouring to ruin the credit of each other. He muſt be ignorant of human nature, that can entertain ſo extravagant a thought.

I will conclude this argument, and our whole plea, with one remark more. If infant baptiſm be a meer human invention, of no validity, as our opponents pretend, it is utterly incredible that Chriſt, "who has promiſed to be with his church to the end of the world," ſhould ſuffer it to be ſo long, and ſo univerſally received in the church; and that he ſhould not in more than 1000 years raiſe up one witneſs, to bear teſtimony againſt ſo great a corruption of his ordinance, as renders it abſolutely void, and of no effect. Can we ſuppoſe that Chriſt had no true church all this time; or that the baptiſm adminiſtred in it was no divine ordinance? How incredible is it, and how diſhonourable to Chriſt, the Head and King of the church, to ſuppoſe that he ſo neglected its intereſts, as to permit a human invention to take the place of his holy ordinance, and that there ſhould not be found one Chriſtian ſociety, nor ſo much as one Chriſtian in the world, to witneſs againſt ſuch preſumption? Can it poſſibly be imagined, that among ſo many ſaints, confeſſors, and martyrs, who lived in all this time, not one ſhould be found objecting to the lawfulneſs of infant baptiſm, if it was a mere nullity, as ſome would perſuade us. Surely Chriſt has never ſuffered, nor will ſuffer the gates of hell to prevail againſt his church, at this rate---And if we could ſuppoſe that a human device had got into the church, inſtead of the true Chriſtian baptiſm, no one knows when, or how; yet the German Anabaptiſts were the moſt unlikely men in the world to be employed by Chriſt as the inſtruments of reforming and reſtoring his neglected, or loſt ordinances; men whoſe opinions and practices were ſo extravagant, as none will, at this day, attempt to vindicate; and who ſeem to have been as manifeſtly actuated by the devil, as any that we have ever had account of.

Let us now recapitulate what has been thus far diſcourſed on this argument. It is granted that all thoſe who are members of the viſible church, are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm. And it appears that the infants of church members, are alſo of the church. For Chriſt has ſaid, "That of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven," which is the church. And he has bleſſed them with impoſition of hands, which is a religious rite, and act of ſacred communion, which has never been adminiſtred to any but the viſible people of God. Chriſt has declared that they are to be received in his name, as belonging to him, or of his church. They are expreſſly called diſciples: and the apoſtles were authorized and inſtructed by their

commiſſion, to diſciple and baptize them, as well as adults. Paul ſays, that the children of believers are holy; but none are ever called holy, but ſuch as are of right church members. They have an intereſt in the covenant with their parents. The covenant with Abraham was to him and his children in their generations. This was the new and everlaſting covenant, by which the church was formed at firſt, and under which it has continued, though with a difference of external adminiſtration, from the beginning to this day. It was not that old covenant which has been aboliſhed; but it was confirmed of God in Chriſt; who, as the miniſter of the circumciſion, confirmed the promiſes made to the fathers. It contained the ſubſtance of the goſpel, which was in it preached unto Abraham. The bleſſing of this covenant is come upon the Gentiles; who are the adopted children of Abraham, and his heirs according to the promiſe, entitled to the privileges of his covenant for themſelves and their children. They are ingrafted branches of the ſame olive, the church from which the unbelieving Jews, the natural branches, were broken off by unbelief: which could be no other than that church which had been formed by the Abrahamic covenant; which church, therefore, was not diſſolved; and which covenant was not diſanulled by the goſpel; nor are the children of God's covenanted people deprived of their intereſt and ſtanding therein. But the promiſe ſtill continues to them and their children, and to thoſe who are at preſent afar off, that is, to ſo many of them as the Lord ſhall call into his church; into the family of Abraham, who is thus made the father of many nations; even of all thoſe of every nation who are added to the church. Theſe therefore, having an intereſt in the covenant, are of the church. Both parents and children, are accordingly the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, the initiating rite or token of admiſſion into the goſpel church, inſtead of circumciſion, which had been enjoined and practiſed under the former diſpenſation. And it is a great confirmation of the church membership of infants under the goſpel, that the Jews never objected to the chriſtians, that their doctrine deprived their children of the privilege of being in the covenant and church of God; nor did the apoſtles, or any of the chriſtians, ever attempt to anſwer any ſuch objection. Beſides, it is atteſted by the ancient fathers, who lived ſoon after the apoſtles, that infant baptiſm had been received and practiſed in the church all along as an apoſtolic inſtitution; and it does not appear that the lawfulneſs of it was called in queſtion by any one for more than 1000 years. All theſe things being conſidered, the evidence of the divine right of infant baptiſm is, I think, clear and full, and ſufficient to put the matter beyond all rational doubt.

SECTION

SECTION III.

WE are now to consider the objections,

And the first is, "that there is no command in scripture for "baptizing infants, nor can it be proved, that the apostles bap- "tized any such. We have express accounts of the baptism of "men and women; but that infants were, or ought to be admit- "ted as subjects of this ordinance, the scripture saith not. How "can this be a divine ordinance, when there is neither precept "nor precedent for it?"

I answer, If it any way appears from the scripture, that infants are subjects of baptism, it matters not whether this doctrine be grounded on an express precept or example, or whether it be taught in some other way. Is it not presumption for us to say, that we will not believe this to be the mind of Christ, unless he has revealed it in the particular way that we may pitch upon? The question should be, whether we can find, or gather from the scriptures any Sufficient evidence, that infants are to be baptized. If the reasons on which our doctrine and practice is grounded, be good and conclusive, we ought to acquiesce in them. It never can be proved, either by scripture or reason, that consequential evidence is insufficient to determine our judgment, and practice, in matters of religion; or that every part of God's revealed will is delivered in express propositions.

Since the scriptures plainly acknowledge and assert the membership of infants in the gospel church, that they are of the number of Christ's disciples, that they are holy, and have an interest in God's gracious covenant; and since it is owned by all, that, according to the order and rule of the gospel, all those who are visibly of the church, disciples, holy, and in the covenant, are the proper subjects of baptism: the consequence is clear, that infants are to be baptized. And this is equivalent to an express order herefor. It is as plain and valid a warrant, though it be consequential, as an express order would be.

We have also such precedents in favour of our practice, as, though they may be cavilled at, must, I think, be of great weight with every unbiassed man; precedents which seem to render it morally certain, that infant baptism was practised by the apostles. Three whole families we read of, who were baptized. If there were any children under the age of discretion, in any of these families, they were certainly admitted. Now, though it be not said whether there were any such children, yet it can scarce be doubted that there were, when the following circumstances are well considered. 1. If we should take three families among us, promiscuously, I suppose the probability would be, at least, fifty to one, that there would be young children in some of them. 2. It is not said, or intimated, that there were no such children in these families. But if it had been the case that there were no children in these houses, and if children ought not to be baptized,

there was great reaſon and neceſſity that ſo important and uncommon a circumſtance ſhould be mentioned, to prevent a dangerous miſtake, which theſe accounts, left as they ſtand, would naturally lead men into. For the baptiſm of theſe families would naturally be conſidered as precedents for baptizing other families, in which there were infants. And as the conſtant and known practice of the church for thouſands of years, and the declarations of Chriſt and his apoſtles, were in favour of infant church membership; how reaſonable muſt it needs appear to practiſe houſhold baptiſm, unleſs it were plainly teſtified and guarded againſt? In ſhort, we have expreſs precedents, or examples, if not of infant baptiſm, yet of houſhold baptiſm, infants not excepted; and that too upon the faith or profeſſion of the head of the family. For it is to be carefully noted, that in theſe accounts it is not ſaid, or intimated, that all in theſe families were baptized on a perſonal profeſſion of faith; but only, that the head of the family believed, and thereupon was baptized with all the houſe. And upon the authority of theſe precedents of family baptiſm, in conjunction with the other grounds which have been mentioned, we aſſert and claim the right of houſhold baptiſm, on behalf of the families of believers, infants not excepted. And we challenge thoſe who will not admit them, to produce an authentic order or precedent for this their refuſal.

As the goſpel, though it has changed the initiating ſacrament, continues infants in the ſame ſtanding in the church, which it was well known they had had all along; it is nothing ſtrange that we have not more expreſs orders and precedents touching infant baptiſm. What need of new precepts and examples, to aſcertain a point, which had in effect been long ſince ſettled; which all underſtood, and all agreed in. But how infinitely ſtrange would it be, if infants, who had from the beginning been of the church, by the appointment of God, and the ſubjects of the initiating ordinance, ſhould be caſt out of the church, and cut off from the people of God, without any order or precedent for it in ſcripture? And yet this we muſt believe, if we deny their church membership and baptiſm. For certainly their is neither order or precedent for excluding them from the church, or from the initiating rite.

If the apoſtles had refuſed to admit infants into the goſpel church by baptiſm, we ſhould, without all peradventure, have had a plain order not to receive them. The caſe was ſuch as muſt, in all reaſon, have required it. Such a great and important change in the conſtitution of the church, as would cut off a great part of thoſe who had always been acknowledged to be in the church and covenant of God, muſt have ſeemed ſtrange to the Jewiſh converts; who would naturally have expected that their children were ſtill to be received with them, as heretofore; and would, accordingly, have moved to have them baptized; as the ancient Jewiſh writers atteſt was commonly practiſed at the admiſſion

miſſion of proſelytes. At leaſt, they would have enquired, whether the goſpel church admitted infants as well as adult believers; which muſt have given occaſion for a plain and expreſs determination of the point, if ſo great and ſtriking an innovation was to be eſtabliſhed. And it would be of great neceſſity that ſuch a decree ſhould be promulgated and recorded, as a ſtanding rule or canon, to be obſerved by all the churches. But nothing like this appears in any writings, ſacred or profane. We may therefore retort the argument upon our adverſaries thus: Since infants had always been received as church members, by the initiating rite, they who refuſe ſtill to receive them, ought to be able to produce plain orders or precedents for this their refuſal: which ſince they cannot do, we conclude that the right of church memberſhip ſtill belongs to them, and that they are ſubjects of baptiſm.

There was not that occaſion for an expreſs mention of the baptiſm of infants, as of women: for as women had hitherto been admitted to the privileges of church memberſhip, without being circumciſed, it m ght well be doubted, whether baptiſm, the ſacrament of admiſſion into the goſpel church, was to be adminiſtred to females. To remove this ſcruple, we have expreſs precedents of female baptiſm; ſhewing that perſons of either ſex are alike proper ſubjects of this ordinance. But there was no room to doubt, whether the token of church memberſhip were to be applied to infants; nor had it ever been called in queſtion----And yet the New Teſtament furniſhes clear proofs that they are members of the goſpel church; and expreſs precedents of houſhold baptiſm, without exception of infants; as has been ſhewn; nor is there any thing of weight to be urged againſt it.

If, after all that has been ſaid, the want of more expreſs orders or precedents for infant baptiſm ſtick as a ſcruple in the minds of any, let the following conſiderations be added to what has been ſaid. 1. Is it not as ſtrange, and more ſo, that we have but one expreſs example of infant circumciſion, in all the Old Teſtament, and not one among the Iſraelites? And yet no doubt, it was practiſed every day. Is it not ſtrange, that there is neither expreſs precept nor example, in the New Teſtament, of women's coming to the Lord's ſupper? And yet no doubt, they did ſo commonly. Jeſus, it ſeems, baptized more diſciples than John. John iv. 1. Is it not ſtrange, that none of the writers of the New Teſtament, except John, give the leaſt hint that he baptized at all, though John's baptizing is often mentioned by almoſt all of them? Theſe inſtances may ſhew, how little ſuch a negative argument is to be depended on in the preſent caſe. 2. Is it not a manifeſt ſign of prejudice, and an unfair mind, to think there is no ſufficient warrant for infant baptiſm, unleſs there be expreſs orders or precedents for it; and yet refuſe to receive infants as of the church, though there be neither precept nor precedent to warrant or juſtify our re uſi ng them that privilege, with which they

were

were inveſted by God, and held it without diſpute thouſands of years? Is not this to ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel? 3. Does it become us to diſregard, and refuſe to admit ſuch evidence as muſt be acknowledged to be of weight, and ſtand cavilling, that the caſe might have been made plainer? I grant it might, if God had pleaſed. And ſo might many other truths, which yet we have ſufficient reaſon to believe. Our opponents muſt own, that if infant baptiſm be contrary to the mind of Chriſt, this would have been much plainer, had there been an expreſs order againſt it; and much diſpute and trouble would have been prevented. The caſe is left juſt as plain as Chriſt has thought fit it ſhould be. And it belongs not to us to object, that the evidence is not ſuch as we ſhould like beſt; but to enquire ſeriouſly, humbly, and prayerfully, what is truth; and thankfully to cloſe with it, upon any good evidence of it that we can find. 4. Let me aſk the objector, What he would have? What proof would ſatisfy him? Would it give ſatisfaction, if the order had run thus: "Go teach "all nations, baptizing them, and their children?" You could as eaſily and fairly evade this, as you do the expreſs proofs we bring of infant church membership. Chriſt ſays expreſsly, that the kingdom of heaven is, or conſiſts of little children; and it is not denied, that the kingdom of heaven is the church; yet we are told, that theſe little children, which are of the church, are not infants, but adults, reſembling little children in humility. The apoſtle ſays expreſsly, that the children of believers are Holy. A character never once given in ſcripture to any but church members: yet this avails nothing. A new ſenſe, unknown in the ſcriptures, is invented, and put upon the word, though it makes nonſenſe of the text. We bring expreſs ſcripture to prove, that the promiſe is to the children, as well as the parents; that believers are accounted the children and heirs of Abraham, according to the promiſe; and that his bleſſing is come upon the Gentiles: And the right of church membership for his natural poſterity, was certainly one article of this bleſſing. Yet our opponents go on "wriggling and wrangling," againſt all this evidence, upon no better foundation than their own arbitrary conjectures and hypotheſis. While men are in this humour, what confidence can we have, that, if there had been an expreſs order for infant baptiſm, they would not ſet their inventions to work to explain it away? And we might be told, that the children to be baptized are ſuch as are capable of profeſſing faith; or that they are ſuch as reſemble infants in humility; or that they are ſpiritual children, who imitate the faith of the firſt converts; or that they are to be baptized after they have been firſt taught, and have given evidence of their effectual calling, &c. In ſhort, a fair and honeſt mind will embrace the truth upon any ſufficient proof, whether direct or conſequential. But when the integrity of the mind is corrupted and diſtorted, by prejudices, and fondneſs for particular ſchemes, the light that is in men becomes darkneſs; and ways

will

will be found to ward off conviction, for the most part, by any arguments whatever. I have considered this objection the more largely, because, though it has really no weight in it, yet it is apt enough to amuse and puzzle weak and simple minds, and to breed scruples, which sometimes prove very troublesome and hurtful.

It is said by some, "that it is not being in the covenant or "church that gives a right to baptism; but a divine order to "that purpose."

But to what purpose is this said, except to raise a dust, and keep up a fruitless altercation? You acknowledge that it is according to the order and rule of the gospel, that all those be received as the subjects of baptism, who have visibly an interest in the covenant, and appear to be such as are to be received into the gospel church. Whether, therefore, their being visibly in covenant and of the church gives them the right to baptism or not; yet, by your own acknowledgment it proves, or evidences an unquestionable right thereto. The allegation in the objection is, indeed, most unreasonable: but if we should admit it, for argument sake; the church membership of infants being proved, their right to baptism is undeniable, as long as it is allowed that all church members are the proper subjects of baptism.

Another principal objection is, that "according to the gospel "order, faith and repentance, or at least a credible profession "thereof, are required of all previously or in order to their being "baptized. The apostles were first to teach those whom they "baptized. Mat. xxviii. 19. Christ puts believing before baptism, when he says, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall "be saved." Mark xvi. 16. And Peter says to the Jews, who "being pricked in their hearts, asked, what they should do; "Repent and be baptized." Acts ii. 38. And when the eunuch "moved, that he might be baptized, Philip said to him, "If "thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." Acts viii. 37. "We read also of several who, agreeably to this rule, were baptized, professing their faith and repentance. If repentance and "faith are the necessary conditions of baptism, infants cannot be "admitted: for they make no profession, and give no evidence "of these qualifications."

Answer. To shew that this objection is without any weight, we need only open our bibles, and read the several texts that are brought to support it. Let us take them in their order.

The first is, Mat. xxviii. 19. I have before observed, that the proper signification of the Greek is, "Go make all nations disci-"ples, (or proselytes) baptizing them---teaching them, &c." as our opponents grant: And that this is a good warrant for the baptism of the infants, who according to the scriptures, and the constant sense and practise of the Jews, in the admission of proselytes, are to be accounted disciples or proselytes, as well as the parents; and are therefore to be admitted by the same outward rite. And to say that infants can no otherwise become disciples than

than by being taught, is no better than a mean begging of the very point to be proved. Whenever the apoſtles made a diſciple of the parent, the right and privilege of diſciples was given to the children; who were as ſuch to be baptized, together with the parents, according to the apoſtles orders, to diſciple and baptize all nations.

And if we ſhould underſtand the word here uſed as ſignifying to inſtruct or indoctrinate, there would be no reaſon for any one to conclude, that infants may not be baptized till they are firſt taught---No ſuch thing is ſaid, or in the leaſt implied. Chriſt's diſciples are indeed to be taught, as well as baptized; children as well as adults; as far, and as ſoon as they are capable of it. But that they may not be baptized till after they have been firſt taught, there is not one word, nor iota in the whole paragraph. And to argue from the bare order of the words, that indoctrination is a neceſſary prerequiſite to baptiſm, in all caſes, is to build upon quickſand indeed. For it is well known, that things are often mentioned in ſcripture, in a promiſcuous or inverted order.--Nay, if the order of the words were any ſolid foundation to argue upon, we might, in this way, prove that it was the will of Chriſt, that the apoſtles ſhould make diſciples, by firſt baptizing them, and then teaching them. For the inſtructions Chriſt gave them when he ſent them forth, ſtand in this order; "Go diſciple all nations, "baptizing them---teaching them," &c. But we lay no ſtreſs at all upon ſuch precarious arguments. The truth is, ſome are to be taught before, and in order to their being baptized. Others are by baptiſm to be introduced into the ſchool of Chriſt, and put under the diſcipline of the church before, and in order to their being taught. Adults we grant, are to be firſt taught, and to make a profeſſion of faith, in order to their being baptized; and that for two reaſons. 1. They are immediately capable of it. 2. They have no viſible right or meetneſs to be received as members of the church of Chriſt, till they profeſs their faith in him. And we may add, that it is not the will of Chriſt that any ſuch ſhould be taken into his ſchool, without their free conſent. On the contrary, there are two reaſons why the infants of believers ſhould by baptiſm be received into the church, without their being firſt taught, and profeſſing their faith. 1. They are not at preſent capable of it. 2. Their church membership and right to baptiſm is manifeſt without it from the ſcriptures; as has been ſhewn. And it is the will of Chriſt, that they be entered into his ſchool immediately, previous to their actual conſent. A profeſſion of faith, does not more evidence the right of a believer to baptiſm, than his infant child's right to the ſame is evidenced by the ſcriptures, which declare that, "of ſuch is the kingdom of "heaven, that the promiſe is to them, and that they are holy."

This text then contains nothing againſt infant baptiſm, and I have elſewhere ſhewn, that it furniſhes a good argument in favour of it. The next paſſage we have to conſider is, Mark xvi. 15,

15, 16. "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth "and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall "be damned." If this text does not contain so much in favour of infant baptism as the other, yet certainly there is nothing against it. It is true, faith and baptism are here required in order to salvation. But whether in order to salvation, faith be required before baptism in all cases, or in any case, is not said; nor can it be proved from this text; which only contains a promise of salvation to those who believe and are baptized. And I presume it will be allowed, that if any one should first be baptized, and afterwards should believe; this promise would belong to him, as really as if he had first believed, and then was baptized.---If any one should be baptized upon a hypocritical profession of faith, and afterwards should become a true believer, he would no doubt be saved; nor would it be required of him that he be again baptized. And though we grant that a profession of faith is required of an unbaptized adult, in order to his being baptized; yet it is an abuse of scripture, to argue that infants are not to be baptized till they believe, because believing is mentioned before baptism in this place, which by the acknowledgment of our opponents, "Speaks only of those who are capable of attending to the preaching of the gospel, and of actual believing." They do not apply to infants the damnatory sentence against unbelievers; and it is equally unreasonable, to urge their want of faith, as an objection to their being admitted to baptism.---In short, I can find nothing in these words, that makes the least difficulty in the matter; unless we will be so ridiculously absurd as to imagine, that infants and adult believers cannot both be the subjects of baptism; or that the mention of the one alone, implies the denial of the other.

In Acts ii. 38. Peter exhorts his hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Those whom he thus exhorts were all adults. For no one preaches to young infants. We grant that repentance is required of unbaptized adults, in order to their being baptized. But does he so much as hint, that infants are not to be admitted: No. But in the next words asserts, that the same promise which belonged to them, and which he holds up as a warrant and encouragement to them, to repent and be baptized, did also belong to their children. But these words have been before considered.

The same remark is to be made on the words of Philip to the Eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be "baptized." Any Pedobaptist, must, upon his own principles, have said the same, upon the like occasion.

The examples of those who were baptized upon a profession of faith, are sometimes brought as an objection against infant baptism. These, we grant, are a proof that believers are the subjects of baptism. We grant further, that they are no proof that infants are subjects. But it is strange it should ever be thought that these examples make any thing against the baptism of infants.

Cannot

Cannot adult believers be admitted, unleſs infants berejected? Is there not room enough in the church for both? A thouſand inſtances of one ſort, are no argument againſt the admiſſion of the other. The truth is, we have not many certain inſtances of adult baptiſm mentioned particularly in the New Teſtament. Several of theſe were perſons of note, who had no children. Of others, it appears, that if there were children in their families, as is highly probable, they were baptized with them. And ſome that are confidently ſuppoſed to have been adults, might a great part of them have been infants, for any thing that appears to the contrary; particularly the 3000 added to the church on the day of Pentecoſt. But among all thoſe, who are ſaid to have been baptized upon a profeſſion of faith, it is remarkable that we find not one that was born of Chriſtian parents, or was, on our principles, a fit ſubject of baptiſm in infancy. We have in the New Teſtament the hiſtory of the church for thirty years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, in all which there is not one inſtance that in the leaſt countenances their practice, who are againſt the baptiſm of the children of believers, till they are of age to profeſs their faith. Wherein they differ from us, they have moſt certainly neither precept nor example in ſcripture to ſupport them.

Upon the whole, this objection, which has often been held up with ſo much parade, is like a vapour; which, beheld at a diſtance, may look as if there might be ſomething in it; but upon a nearer view, is found to be as light and unſubſtantial as the air, while we endeavour to handle it, we can find nothing in it.

It is objected by ſome, that "Chriſt was baptized in adult age; "and we ought herein to follow his example."

Anſwer. John's baptiſm, with which Chriſt was baptized, was not inſtituted till Chriſt was of adult age. How could it be expected that he ſhould have the ordinance adminiſtred to him, before it was a divine ordinance? We might as well argue againſt infant circumciſion, becauſe Abraham was circumciſed in adult age. But Chriſt in his infancy was dedicated to God, and received into the number of his people, according to the ordinances then in uſe: which may ſerve as a precedent and pattern to chriſtians to dedicate their children to God in baptiſm, the rite of induction to the chriſtian church. Chriſt's baptiſm was the token of his ſolemn conſecration to his public miniſtry; ſignifying his anointing with the Holy Ghoſt to the offices of prophet, prieſt, and king, which he was to execute, and was accordingly inaugurated at his entering on the public diſcharge of theſe his offices, when he was about thirty years of age. There were many peculiar circumſtances attending Chriſt's baptiſm, which are not imitable by us.

It is objected, "That infant baptiſm is a part of popery, the "baſis of national churches, and worldly eſtabliſhments; that it "unites the church and world, and keeps them together."

Anſwer.

Answer. Infant baptism is grounded on the scriptures; and is commonly practised in those churches that are not, nor ever were subject to the Pope; therefore, it is not a part of Popery, though practised, as divers other ordinances are, in the Roman church.

Infant baptism is not the basis of national churches, and worldly establishments. Infants were church members long before there was a national church in the world; which was not till the Horeb covenant. That particular constitution of a church, and form of administration, whereby it becomes national, has no connection with, or dependance upon infant baptism. A national church may as well be formed upon the principle of Antepedobaptism as any other. If the church of England should renounce infant baptism, and yet retain its present constitution in other respects, it would still be, and might as well continue, a national church as ever. There may be a national church, though not one half of the nation are of it. And there would be no national church, though all the individuals of the nation were members of congregational churches. And as for worldly establishments of religion, it is too plain to need insisting on, that infant baptism no way affects them. Infant baptism stands as well without, as with human establishments; and human establishments can stand as well without, as with infant baptism.

Infant baptism does not unite the church and the world, and keep them together. If by the world we mean those that are not of the visible church; how can the baptizing of such infants as are of the church, unite the church with those that do not belong to it? If by the world be meant professed christians, who are manifestly unmeet and unworthy of christian communion, infant baptism neither unites the church, nor keeps it united with any such. It is owing to the neglect or abuse of discipline, when such remain united with the church. Or if any should mean by the world, visible Christians, who are secretly hypocritical; it is not the will of Christ that the church should be separated from these, till their hypocrisy becomes manifest. Nor would the abolishing of infant baptism make such a separation.

It is objected, "That the answer of a good conscience is required in baptism, in order to its being of saving advantage, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And as infants are incapable of this, they are not subjects of baptism." I answer, Though the answer or engagement of a good conscience must be joined with the outward washing with water, when the subject is capable of it, yet this makes nothing against infant baptism. For if the answer of a good conscience be afterwards annexed to the sacramental washing received in infancy, such a baptism is as valid, and as available to salvation, as if the washing with water, and the answer of a good conscience, had been at the same time. And infants are by their baptism, bound to the answer of a good conscience: which they are to recognize and perform, when they are capable of it. Indeed,

deed, this paſſage ſpeaks plainly in our favour. For the apoſtle compares baptiſm to the ark of Noah, as being the figure or antitype of it, bearing a reſemblance to it. Noah by faith, prepared the ark, for the ſaving of himſelf and his houſe. As his children were received with him into the ark, ſo the children of believers belong to the church, and are the ſubjects of baptiſm, together with their parents; which bears in this reſpect, the figure and reſemblance of the ark

It is alſo objected, that "if infants are members of the church, "and ſubjects of baptiſm, they ought alſo to be admitted to par- "take of the Lord's ſupper, which is an ordinance to which all "the members of the Chriſtian church have a right. And ac- "cordingly it was cuſtomary with the ancient Chriſtians, who "practiſed infant baptiſm, to adminiſter the Lord's ſupper alſo to "them. And they who diſapprove the communicating of in- "fants, ſhould, if they would be conſiſtent, diſallow the bap- "tizing of them.

Anſwer. We grant that infants, as church members, have an external right to all the ordinances of the viſible church, as far, and ſoon as they are actually capable of, and meet for them. As they are immediately capable and meet ſubjects of baptiſm, they are to be admitted thereto without delay. As ſoon as they are capable of receiving inſtruction from the word, they ſhould be brought to give their attendance to it; and when they can ſo far underſtand the nature and deſign of the Lord's ſupper, and have ſuch a meaſure of knowledge and faith, that they can diſcern the Lord's body, and examine themſelves, and ſo eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; it is not only their right, but their duty to do ſo, without delay. Though an infant may have a right to an eſtate, of which he is an heir, yet he is not admitted to poſſeſs, occupy, and improve it, till he is of capacity for it. And ſuch is the nature and deſign of the Lord's ſupper, that a right attendance on it, requires an actual capacity and preſent meetneſs for it; which infants have not. And it is this want of capacity and meetneſs, and not a want of right to church privileges, that is the reaſon why we do not admit them. But this reaſon does not exclude them from baptiſm; of which they are as capable and meet ſubjects now, as they were of circumciſion formerly. They are capable of the ſign, and the thing ſignified; of coming under the obligations, and having the grace and privileges of the covenant ſecured and conveyed to them; of being ſolemnly dedicated to God; recognized and admitted, as his viſible church and people. Theſe things they are capable of in infancy. And to ſignify and effect theſe, is the deſign and uſe of baptiſm, as has been obſerved.

We acknowledge it was an error in the ancient Chriſtians, to adminiſter the Lord's ſupper to infants. They might, probably, be led into it, by conſidering that the Jewiſh infants did eat of the paſſover; which, they might ſuppoſe, anſwered to the Lord's ſupper;

per; & by miſtaking what Chriſt ſaid of the neceſſity of eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood. The reaſon was plauſible, though inconcluſive. And they were, upon further conſideration, convinced of their miſtake; and laid this practice wholly aſide. But we do not find that the divine right of infant baptiſm was ever called in queſtion by them, or the practice of it diſcontinued. Their admitting infants to the Lord's ſupper, though irregular, was yet a leſs and more excuſeable error, than it is to ſhut them wholly out of the church. Though a young infant may not be fit to ſit at the table, and eat the meat of ſtrong men; yet this would not, by any means, be ſo improper, as to turn him out of doors, and not own him as belonging to the family.

Thus I have conſidered all the chief objections againſt infant baptiſm, that I have met with; which I have aimed to ſtate fairly and candidly, though briefly---I can find no weight in them. But if, after all, it ſhould ſeem to any, that there is ſome real difficulty in the caſe, that they know not how to remove; this ought not to overthrow or ſtagger their belief of the doctrine itſelf, if the arguments in favour of it are found to be concluſive, or of more weight than the contrary objections. Yea; if any ſhould think there is only a greater probability for, than againſt it, they ought to be determined in their judgment and practice, by probable evidence, till they can obtain ſuch proofs as are more full and ſatisfactory.

I intended to have added ſome reflections upon the whole argument. But here I muſt aim to be as brief as poſſible; as this diſcourſe is already much longer than was intended.

It appears, I truſt, that our opponents have no reaſon to ſay, as they are wont to do with great confidence, that there is nothing in the ſcriptures in favour of infant baptiſm, but they plainly declare againſt it. We have ſearched the ſcriptures, and find nothing at all contrary to infant baptiſm; and plain proofs that infants are members of the goſpel church, and that all church members are the ſubjects of baptiſm. Whether this does not amount to a fair and full proof, let every one who has the reaſon of a man conſider and judge.

We learn alſo, the error of rebaptizing thoſe, who have been baptized in their infancy. This practice cannot be juſtified either by precept or example, or any good reaſons. Infant baptiſm adminiſtred by ſprinkling, we have examined by the ſcriptures, and find it to be well warranted. To renounce it therefore, and be baptized over again, is utterly wrong. And though we charitably believe that thoſe who have gone into this practice, have done it conſcientiouſly, yet their conſciences were therein miſguided, and they have entangled themſelves by the wrong ſtep they have taken, and given ſatan an advantage againſt them. Having openly renounced communion with all chriſtians, but thoſe of their own party, they too often appear to be exceedingly hardened againſt all means that

can

can be uſed for convincing them of their error; and take it with great ſcorn and impatience, to have it ſuggeſted to them that perhaps they are in a miſtake. And if any ſuch ſuſpicions ſhould ever ariſe in their minds, yet what a ſtrong temptation will they have to wink hard againſt the light, when it begins to enter into their minds, and to diſcover to them, what they cannot bear the thoughts of, that in the height of their confidence they have been wrong. It is very unhappy when chriſtians run themſelves into ſuch ſad intanglements, and yet their ſcruples and prejudices fixed and riveted.

Let ſuch then as labour under doubts and ſcruples, reſpecting the validity of the baptiſm they have received in their infancy, be adviſed not to be haſty and raſh, in taking a ſtep of ſo much importance, as the renouncing of this their baptiſmal dedication to God, and the communion of thoſe churches, which have had evident tokens of the gracious preſence of Chriſt in their adminiſtrations. We are far from urging you to give up your conſciences to our direction. We claim no dominion over the faith of any one, but wiſh you to examine and judge for yourſelves, what is truth, and what is right. If we can give you any aſſiſtance in ſearching the ſcriptures, by pointing out to your notice any evidences of the truth which you may have overlooked, we would willingly, in this way, be helpers of your joy. Nor do we object to your conſidering candidly what may be offered on the other ſide: for we are perſuaded that a good cauſe will ſuffer no damage by being thoroughly examined in the cleareſt light. But remember there is a great difference between a difficulty and a clear reaſon, between being puzzled, and having a rational and ſatisfactory conviction; between having ſcruples about the regularity of infant baptiſm, and having ſufficient arguments againſt it. Take time to weigh things fairly and juſtly; and let no one drive you along blindly, faſter than you can ſee your way plain before you. Be willing to take pains, and uſe all the helps you can come at, to get a right underſtanding of the grounds and reaſons on either ſide. If there be any thing you cannot comprehend, ſeek the aſſiſtance of thoſe who may be able to inſtruct you. And if, after all, you ſhould be unſatisfied, rather wait in ſuſpence, till God ſhall vouchſafe you further light, than change blindly and at a venture, as many have done. And cheriſh a meek and humble diſpoſition. "God will guide the meek in judgment, and teach "the meek his way." Take heed that Satan does not blow you up with ſpiritual pride, which is more odious and dangerous than any other. "Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit, there is "more hope of a fool, than of him." And take heed of wilfulneſs, of evil ſurmiſings, and prejudices: and let it be your daily and earneſt prayer to God, that he would guide and keep you in his own way, and grant you that wiſdom and underſtanding which is needful for your direction. And beware that no man deceive

ceive and bias you with crafty artifices, and confident pretences, inſtead of ſound reaſons. "Believe not every ſpirit, but try the "ſpirits, whether they be of God; for many falſe prophets are "gone out into the world." If there are any that are manifeſtly acted by a party ſpirit; any that would ſour and leaven your minds with uncharitableneſs; any that would lead you away from the ſcriptures, to follow enthuſiaſtic impreſſions and impulſes; any who endeavour to perſuade by noiſe and clamour, and fierceneſs, and ſtriking the paſſions, inſtead of enlightning the underſtanding by plain ſcripture, and fair calm reaſoning; any that endeavour to move men from their ſtedfaſtneſs, by flatteries, or cenſures, by confidence, by pitying the blindneſs of others, or boaſting of their own illuminations; ſuch as theſe you have reaſon to be cautious of hearkening to. Take heed that you be not impoſed on with chaff inſtead of wheat; with vain dreams and hurtful prejudices, inſtead of divine truths. Make the ſcriptures the rule of your religion, according to the plain and natural interpretation of them. If any one can offer you light from the ſcriptures, attend to it; but reſolve to ſee and judge for yourſelves. And let it be your care conſcientiouſly to practice agreeably to what you have already learned of the will of God. This is a good preſervative againſt dangerous miſtakes, and being carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines. "If any man will do "the will of God, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of "God."

Let thoſe who are eſtabliſhed in the belief of this doctrine, which has thus far been diſcourſed of, be thankful to God for the kind regard he has ſhewn for the offspring of his covenant people. Let parents hereby be encouraged to devote their children to him in baptiſm, without needleſs delay; and alſo to pray for them, with a ſtedfaſt faith and truſt in that promiſe, which is to believers and their children. If any of your children ſhould die in their infancy, reſign them patiently to the mercy of a covenant God, with a comfortable perſuaſion that they are of the number of thoſe little ones, who belong to the kingdom of heaven. If they ſhould live to grow up under your care, train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, hoping and expecting a ſpecial bleſſing on theſe labours of love. Conſider that theſe children are of the church of Chriſt. He has put them under your care to be brought up for him. Let your belief of this animate your hopes, your prayers, and endeavours for them. They who diſbelieve and deny this article of our faith cut themſelves off from theſe comfortable and encouraging views, with reſpect to their children. And how far their neglect of dedicating them to God in his appointed ordinance may expoſe ſuch families to the tokens of the divine diſpleaſure, ought ſeriouſly to be conſidered. And yet we hope, with reſpect to thoſe of them who are the true people of God, that the promiſe is to their children as well as ours though

though they do not believe it, or take the comfort, or make the improvement of it, which they ought. We willingly hope and truſt, that their unbelief in this point, will not make the faith or promiſe of God without effect; but that they will have the joy of ſeeing the accompliſhment thereof, in the bleſſings of divine grace upon their children. But let us ſhew that the doctrine of infant baptiſm is, with us, not a barren ſpeculation, but a comforting encouraging and engaging motive to the diſcharge of family duties. If we believe that God has reſerves of new covenant bleſſings for our families, according to his gracious promiſe, let us uſe the means in order to the conveyance of theſe bleſſings to them. And let us order our houſe with piety, gravity and wiſdom, as becomes the church and houſe of God, walking therein with a perfect heart.

And though we would with pleaſure expreſs our chriſtian affection to thoſe who diſſent from us in this point, when they appear to be ſincere in the profeſſion and practice of the fundamentals of chriſtianity; yet I think we ſhould not give any countenance to the attempts of thoſe who ſet themſelves to vilify and ſet at nought our ſacred adminiſtration, and ſour the minds of the ſimple with the leaven of uncharitableneſs and ſchiſm. If we are eſtabliſhed in this truth, and have that love and zeal for it which we ought to have, we ſhould not look on with cool indifference, while miſtaken men are endeavouring to rob us of this ſacred depoſitum, delivered to the ſaints. This article of our holy faith is of too much importance to be parted with. We ſhould not act ſo inconſiſtent a part, as to do any thing that may ſtrengthen their hands, and give them an advantage, who would "by fair "ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple," and perſuade them to renounce communion with the churches of the ſaints in the holy ordinances of Chriſt. And that we may be able to contend for this truth with greater ſkill and ſucceſs, let us labour to be furniſhed with ſuch clear, ſcriptural arguments as may be ſufficient to convince, or at leaſt ſilence, gainſayers.---Let us ſtudy and digeſt well the reaſons on which this doctrine and practice of the church is grounded, that ſo we may all, to greater advantage, be fellow helpers to the truth. And we need not fear, but that the cauſe of God will be ſupported, and in the end will triumph, whatever oppoſition may be made to it.

In the concluſion, I would turn myſelf to the riſing generation, who are the children of the covenant, and have, by baptiſm, been admitted into the church of God. After having ſaid ſo much for you, in pleading your cauſe, and maintaining your rights, in oppoſition to thoſe who would caſt you out of the inheritance of the Lord, let me have your attention, while I ſay a few things to you. Be thankful to God, that he has been pleaſed to inveſt you with the privileges, and lay you under the bonds, of his gracious covenant; and let the conſideration quicken and encourage you in ſeeking and ſerving

the

the God of your fathers. Though the grace of the new covenant be promiſed, in a particular manner, to the children of God's covenant people, yet you are not to expect a ſaving application of it to any of you, unleſs you diligently ſeek for it, in the uſe of his appointed means. "He will "for this be enquired of by you." But for your encouragement, "He hath not ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye "me in vain." Theſe promiſes furniſh the children of the covenant with a peculiar plea, in their prayers to God, for his converting and ſanctifying grace. Avouch then your fathers God for your God; and let Ephraim's prayer be yours, "Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the "Lord my God." And labour to get a good underſtanding of the grounds and principles of the Chriſtian doctrine; but reſt not in a doctrinal knowledge, without a practical and experimental acquaintance with its divine power and efficacy to ſanctify you in ſpirit, ſoul, and body. And as your place and ſtanding in the church obliges you in duty, as well as gives you a viſible right, to attend all the ordinances which Chriſt has inſtituted for the edification of his church, particularly the ordinance of the Lord's ſupper, I would now invite you to come to this ſacred feaſt, with that due preparation which is required in a worthy approach thereto: and by a ſincere and ſolemn recognition of your baptiſmal vows, make the act of your parents, in dedicating you to God, your own act; and let your whole converſation be as becomes members of the church. As you belong to the ſchool of Chriſt, labour to make proficiency daily under the inſtructions and diſcipline of it.---You are admitted into the ſociety of God's profeſſing people; improve your relation and connection with them for your improvement in the graces and virtues of the Chriſtian temper and life, that you may be daily growing up to the meaſure of perfect men in Chriſt, and to a meetneſs to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Be the companions of them that fear the Lord, and be not companions of fools.---"He that "walketh with the wiſe ſhall be wiſe, but a companion of "fools ſhall be deſtroyed."

But theſe things have been often inculcated, and therefore I ſhall not enlarge upon them; but ſhall leave with you the ſolemn charge of David to his beloved ſon and ſucceſſor: "And now, my children, know the God of your fathers, "and ſerve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind; "for the Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all "the imaginations of the thoughts: If you ſeek him, he "will be found of you; but if you forſake him, he will "caſt you off for ever."

FINIS.

BOSTON, Sept. 3, 1781.

In the Preſs, and will be publiſhed the beginning of October,

NUMBER I.

OF AN IMPARTIAL

HISTORY

OF THE

WAR IN AMERICA,

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN and the UNITED STATES;

From its Commencement (with a General Introductory Hiſtory on the firſt ſettling of the Country) and will be carried forward to the End of the War:

Exhibiting a circumſtantial, connected, and complete Account of the real Cauſe, Riſe, and Progreſs of the War, interſperſed with Anecdotes and Characters of the different Commanders, and Accounts of ſuch Perſonages in Congreſs as have diſtinguiſhed themſelves during the Conteſt.

With an Appendix (which will be added to the firſt Volume) containing a Collection of intereſting and authentic Papers, tending to elucidate the Hiſtory.

CONDITIONS.

I. THE Work will be publiſhed in monthly Numbers, printed on beautiful new Types, and excellent Paper. Each Number will contain ſixty four pages, in large octavo.----The firſt Number will be adorned with a beautiful Copperplate Frontiſpiece of his Excellency Governor HANCOCK, who was Preſident of the American Congreſs, when they declared Independence.----In the third Number will be given a beautiful Likeneſs of his Excellency General WASHINGTON; and every alternate Number will be embelliſhed with elegant Likeneſſes of the Heroes of the Age. The Engravings will be executed by an ingenious Artiſt.

II. THE Work will be put to the Preſs, as ſoon as a ſufficient Number of Subſcribers have given in their Names; and, as ſeveral Gentlemen have already encouraged the Work, it is expected

pected the first Number will be published the Beginning of October, and the succeeding Numbers, on the first Days of the ensuing Months.

III. THE Price of each Number, to Subscribers, stitched in blue Paper, will be only Three Shillings Lawful Money, or Country Produce in Proportion. The Money to be paid on the Delivery of each Number.

IV. THOSE who subscribe for Twelve Numbers, shall have two gratis.

Subscriptions for the above Work, will be thankfully received by

NATHANIEL COVERLY and
ROBERT HODGE.

BRITISH
29 JY 75
MUSEUM